This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

https://books.google.com

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE PENNSYLVANIA
STATE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES

Digitized by Google

HISTORY OF
THE SECOND WORLD WAR
UNITED KINGDOM MILITARY SERIES

Edited by Sir James Butler

Digitized by Google

The authors of the Military Histories have been given full access to official documents. They and the editor are alone responsible for the statements made and the views expressed.

Digitized by Google

THE MEDITERRANEAN AND MIDDLE EAST

VOLUME VI

Victory in the Mediterranean

PART I

1st April to 4th June 1944

BY

BRIGADIER C. J. C. MOLONY

WITH

CAPTAIN F. C. FLYNN, R.N.

MAJOR-GENERAL H. L. DAVIES, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.

GROUP CAPTAIN T. P. GLEAVE, C.B.E.

REVISED BY

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM JACKSON, G.B.E., K.C.B., M.C.

LONDON

HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

Digitized by Google

First published 1984

© *Crown copyright 1984*

HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
Government Bookshops
49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6HB
13a Castle Street, Edinburgh EH2 3AR
Brazennose Street, Manchester M60 8AS
Southey House, Wine Street, Bristol BS1 2BQ
258 Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2HE
80 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4JY
Government publications are also available through booksellers

Printed in the UK for Her Majesty's Stationery Office
Dd. 596251 C7 9/83
ISBN 011 630936 9*

Digitized by Google

CABINET OFFICE

The Mediterranean and Middle East Vol. VI Part 1

ISBN 0 11 630936 9

CORRECTIONS

page 14 H.Q. 4th U.S. Corps (*Lieutenant-General* Willis D. Crittenberger)

page 116

Bridge	*Div Sector*	*Date and time of completion*	*Built by*
Amazon Class 30		13th May 5 a.m.	7th, 59th, 225th and 578th (Corps Tps) Field Companies R.E.
Congo Class 30		14th May 8.30 a.m.	7th and 586th (Army Tps) Field Companies R.E.
Blackwater Class 40			59th Field Company R.E.

* Amendments taken from T. M. J. Riordan: *A History of the 7th Field Company R.E.* (York 1984) p. 140–58.

page 389 para 1 line 5: *Special* Boat Squadron

page 408 Note: the *Special* Boat Squadron (later named the *Special* Boat Service)

OCTOBER 1986 *LONDON* HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

Digitized by Google

First published 1984

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

PART I

		Page
INTRODUCTION		ix
CHAPTER I. PREPARATION FOR ALEXANDER'S SPRING OFFENSIVE 1944		
(i)	The evolution of Alexander's plan	1
(ii)	The administrative background	23
(iii)	Air operations, 1st April to 12th May	33
(iv)	The German side	47
CHAPTER II. THE SPRING OFFENSIVE: PLANS OF THE ALLIED ARMIES, CORPS AND AIR FORCES		
(i)	Plans of 8th and 5th Armies, and of the Allied Air Forces	55
(ii)	The German side	68
(iii)	Plans of 13th Corps and of the Polish Corps	76
(iv)	Plans of the French Expeditionary Corps and of 2nd U.S. Corps	89
(v)	An outline of the Battle	95
CHAPTER III. 5TH AND 8TH ARMIES BREAK THE GUSTAV LINE (12TH–18TH MAY 1944)		
(i)	Zero Hour; night 11th/12th May	97
(ii)	5th and 8th Armies, night 11th/12th May and 12th May	99
(iii)	The Germans meet the Allied Attacks	111
(iv)	13th Corps expands its bridgehead; 8th Army breaks the Gustav Line	115
(v)	5th Army breaks the Gustav Line	135
(vi)	Air Operations	152

Digitized by Google

Page

CHAPTER IV. 5TH AND 8TH ARMIES BREAK THE HITLER LINE (19TH–25TH MAY 1944)

(i) Some Allied and German considerations after the breaking of the Gustav Line 163
(ii) Breaking the Hitler Line: preliminaries . . 165
(iii) 5th Army: advance of 2nd U.S. Corps and of the French Expeditionary Corps 170
(iv) 8th Army: the Battle of the Hitler Line . . 176
(v) 8th Army: the advance to the River Melfa . . 196
(vi) Air Operations, 19th May to 5th June . . 202

CHAPTER V. 'THE ALLIES ARE IN ROME'

(i) 5th Army: plans for 6th U.S. Corps' offensive from the beachhead at Anzio . . . 219
(ii) Situation of *AOK 14* at the beachhead . . 224
(iii) 5th Army: 6th U.S. Corps' offensive, 23rd to 25th May 227
(iv) 8th Army: the advance of 13th Corps and the Canadian Corps, 25th May to 1st June: 10th Corps enters the battle 236
(v) The Germans in trouble from the French Expeditionary Corps, and from 8th Army, 30th May to 4th June 251
(vi) 5th Army advances to Rome: the end of the Allies' Spring offensive 260
(vii) Reflections on the Spring offensive . . . 284

CHAPTER VI. ALLIED STRATEGY FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE AFTER THE BATTLE FOR ROME: THE ANVIL DEBATE (OCTOBER 1943–JULY 1944)

(i) The Allies disagree on strategy for the Mediterranean Theatre 295
(ii) German Dilemmas 338

CHAPTER VII. THE WAR AT SEA (APRIL TO JUNE 1944): AND A GLANCE AT YUGOSLAVIA

(i) The defence of Allied sea convoys: Naval support of the Armies 349
(ii) Allied air attacks upon German ships at sea and in harbour 358

Digitized by Google

Page

(iii) The Air Forces mine the Danube . . . 372
(iv) The Navy attacks German shipping: operations by submarines and Coastal Forces . . . 375
(v) The development of Special Operations in the Mediterranean Theatre 387
(vi) Yugoslavia Partisan operations and British support, March to June 1944 393
(vii) The creation of the Balkan Air Force . . . 401

CHAPTER VIII. BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN ITALY FROM THE FALL OF ROME TO THE FIRST BATTLES OF THE GOTHIC LINE (JUNE 1944–SEPTEMBER 1944)
(i) General introductory remarks 409
(ii) Control of the Lines of Communication . . 415
(iii) Sea convoys and the operations of ports . . 418
(iv) Repair and operation of railways . . . 423
(v) Transport by road 429
(vi) Theatre reserves of supplies and stores . . 437
(vii) Fuel for the Army and Air Force . . . 438
(viii) Problem of artillery ammunition . . . 444
(ix) Search for reinforcements 447
(x) Catering, cooking, distribution of food and handling forage 450
(xi) Service and repair of vehicles 454
(xii) Royal Air Force administration . . . 458
(xiii) Conclusion 458

APPENDIX 1. Order of Battle, Royal Air Force and United States Air Forces; Mediterranean Allied Air Forces – 12th May 1944 461

APPENDIX 2. Operational Code Names mentioned in Part I of Volume VI 464

REFERENCES 465

Index 501

Digitized by Google

MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

1.	Italy	*End paper*
		Facing Page
2.	Cassino – Rome Battleground; Inset: A.A.I. Rear Area	1
3.	Bomber Targets in the Battle for Rome; Inset I: Rail Interdiction, results of Operations Strangle; Inset II; Routes attacked during Enemy Retreat	33
4.	General Layout of 14th Panzer Corps and right wing of 51st Mountain Corps	57
5.	Diadem: 5th Army Outline Plan	61
6.	Diadem: Areas allocated to sub-formations of M.A.T.A.F.	67
7.	Diadem: Plan of 4th Infantry and 8th Indian Divisions, 13th Corps	75
8.	Diadem: Polish Corps' Plan	85
9.	5th Army drive west to Terracina 19th–23rd May 1944	151
10.	1st Canadian Corps breaks the Hitler Line and advances to the Melfa 23rd–25th May 1944	175
11.	*AOK 10* withdraws north of Rome; successive retreat lines 26th May to 4th June 1944	201
12.	The Central and Western Mediterranean	211
13.	The Central and Eastern Mediterranean; Inset 1: The Aegean Islands; Inset 2: The North Adriatic	211
14.	5th Army takes Rome 23rd May–4th June 1944	219
15.	Break out from Anzio 23rd–31st May 1944	227
16.	8th Army's advance up Liri and Sacco Valleys 25th May–4th June 1944	235
17.	2nd S.S. Brigade in the attack on Brac 2nd–4th June 1944	397
18.	Plan for the organisation of the L. of C. in the assault on the Gothic Line	415
19.	Development of the L. of C. during the Allied advance to Florence May–August 1944	425
20.	The Mediterranean	*End paper*

Digitized by Google

INTRODUCTION

THIS is the sixth and last volume of the British Official History of the Mediterranean and Middle East Campaigns in the Second World War. In it we describe the final triumph over the *Wehrmacht* of the Allied armies, navies and air forces in the Mediterranean. In the course of operations against the Axis these forces had grown in size, in efficiency and, above all, in battle experience. They were opposed by equally experienced, though less well equipped, German forces fighting a defensive campaign in country ideally suited to defence. In consequence, although the last year's fighting did lead to the collapse of German Army Group C in May 1945, the Allies' success was not easily nor cheaply bought. There was bitter fighting and heavy losses on both sides before victory was won.

The last year's campaign in the Mediterranean was replete with military and political events of which we have very full records from both sides. The strategy and tactics of the Italian campaign are our main concern, but, as developments in Greece and Yugoslavia are also outlined in order to indicate their influence both on general British policy and on the campaign in Italy, our choice and handling of the extensive material available has perforce been highly selective. Even so, we found that Volume VI was bulkier than the over-large Volume V. We have, therefore, split it into three which will be separately published and indexed. Each will take as its main theme one of the three major offensives staged by the Allies during the final year of the fighting in Italy.

Part I: 'Diadem', the final battles for Rome.
Part II: 'Olive', the breaching of the Gothic Line.
Part III: 'Grapeshot', the destruction of Army Group C.

In our interpretation of events we have continued to use the procedures and sources of evidence defined in our Introduction to Volume V. In three instances, however, further explanation is needed. In this volume we have avoided straying into the territory of the official Intelligence History. Our Intelligence material, as in previous volumes, has been studied at field level as it influenced commanders in decision making. On the Allied side it has been drawn largely from the plans for set piece battles and from formation Intelligence Summaries during operations. For a full study of Intelligence and its effect on strategy and operations, the reader is referred to Professor F. H. Hinsley's, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Volume III.

Digitized by Google

The second explanation concerns the difficult distinction between direct and indirect air support. We have adopted an arbitrarily chosen line projected 20 miles into enemy territory from our own front line. The area between the two lines is treated as the 'battle area' and air operations inside it as being in direct or close support of the Allied armies. Unfortunatly the plethora of Allied air force documents giving sorties flown and bombloads dropped contain many contradictions. We have taken what we consider to have been the most reliable consolidated returns which, with retrospective amendments and approximations, give a picture of the total monthly effort from June 1944 to May 1945 that is sufficiently accurate for our purposes. We found, however, that the distinction between direct and indirect air support was not practicable for the winter stalemate from January to March 1945. Direct air support for April and May 1945 is fully covered in the narratives of the final battles.

Our third point is to highlight the special chapter on Administration in Part I. Brigadier Molony devised Chapter VIII before he died as an acknowledgement of the sterling work of the Administrative Services which supported the Armies and Air Forces in Italy with such conspicuous and yet unsung success, providing a continuous supply of almost every article and commodity needed by the fighting men. We have amplified his work in Part II and Part III when we deal with the critical manpower and ammunition shortages.

During the writing of this volume our original team of four became sadly depeleted by the death of no less than three of its number. Major General H. L. Davies, the Army Historian, and Captain F. C. Flynn, the Naval Historian, both died in 1975. Then, in 1976, the team suffered the tragic loss of the team Editor, Brigadier C. J. C. Molony. He had completed the first drafts of Chapters I to VIII and these have been edited to form Part I of this volume as a tribute to him. General Sir William Jackson was appointed team Editor in Brigadier Molony's place and assumed the role of Army Historian as well.

It would not have been possible to overcome the loss of continuity caused by the decimation of the team had it not been for the able and conscientious work of Miss Diana F. Butler and Mrs N. B. Taylor who have carried out the research work on the Allied and German sides respectively. Mrs Taylor has written the narratives cited in our references under CAB EDS. Miss Butler, in addition to carrying out all the meticulous referencing, has been responsible for preparing the multitudinous details for the Maps.

Digitized by Google

For Part I all the maps have been drawn by Mr A. E. Kelleway; Mr C. E. Jones helped to prepare the text for printing and Mrs Taylor has compiled the Index.

We are grateful too for the ready support and help we have received from the Historical Branches of the three Service Departments of the Ministry of Defence, from the Keepers of records and documents in the Cabinet Office, and to the staffs of the Public Record Office and the Imperial War Museum.

We are also indebted to the Official Histories of Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, France and the United States of America, upon whose works we have relied and used extensively as our references will show.

W.G.F.J.
T.P.G.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER I

PREPARATION FOR ALEXANDER'S SPRING OFFENSIVE 1944

(i)

See Maps 1 and 2

BY the end of March 1944 the Allies' land forces in Italy had been forced to pause in their offensive against the German defensive positions which spanned Italy from the mouth of the River Garigliano on the west coast to Torre Mucchia south-east of Pescara on the east coast.* The task of the Allied Armies in Italy remained as General Eisenhower had defined it on 8th November 1943: to secure the area of Rome by advancing to the general line Civitavecchia–Terni[1]. However during December 1943 it had become clear to Alexander that the onset of winter and the exhaustion of General Mark W. Clark's 5th Army and General Sir Oliver Leese's 8th Army had made it impracticable to maintain pressure on both sides of the Apennines. Alexander therefore decided not to pursue large operations with 8th Army up the Adriatic coast but to reinforce 5th Army for continued operations towards Rome on the western side of the Apennines only. The result was a struggle to break the German Gustav Line in bitter winter weather and in the face of the determined opposition by General von Vietinghoff's *AOK 10* which made skilful use of the defensive strength of the grim mountainous terrain. 10th Corps had made a small bridgehead across the lower Garigliano. 2nd U.S. Corps had failed

---

* The title of the Allies' land forces in Italy was changed three times. Before 11th January 1944 it was 15th Army Group; on 11th January it became Allied Forces in Italy; on 18th January Allied Central Mediterranean Force; and on 9th March Allied Armies in Italy (A.A.I.). The titles of the main constituents remained 5th and 8th Army. On 10th March 1944 the principal commanders (other than naval and air commanders) were:
Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre:
General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson.
Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre:
Lieutenant-General Jacob L. Devers, U.S. Army:
C.-in-C. Allied Armies in Italy:
General the Hon. Sir Harold Alexander.

Digitized by Google

to cross the River Gari south of Cassino town,* or to breach the German defences in Cassino town and on Monastery Hill above it, and so had failed in its purpose of breaking into the Liri valley and advancing to Frosinone. When 2nd U.S. Corps had exhausted itself, the improvised New Zealand Corps had taken over the Americans' tasks, and like the Americans had failed. North of Cassino the French Expeditionary Corps had made a small breach in the Gustav Line at Mts Belvedere (Pt 721) and Abate (Pt 915). Besides these operations Clark, in January 1944, had launched 6th U.S. Corps, composed of American and British divisions, in a sea-borne expedition to land at Anzio, some sixty miles behind the western flank of the Gustav Line.[2] Mr. Churchill had decided that this amphibious operation should be undertaken, and Mr. Roosevelt and the Combined Chiefs of Staff had concurred. General direction of the operation was in the hands of Alexander, and detailed execution in those of Clark. The object of the operation was to cut the communications of the German forces which faced the main part of 5th Army by striking out to the Alban Hills, south-east of Rome, but Field-Marshal Kesselring had succeeded in confining 6th U.S. Corps to its beachhead.

While the Allied Armies in Italy had been thus engaged, the Allied Naval forces had been supporting the land forces; ensuring the arrival of their sea-borne supplies; attacking such German shipping as still tried to sail in the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, and the Aegean; and supporting the operations of Tito's partisans on the Dalmatian coast and among its islands. The Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, under the command of Lieutenant-General Ira C. Eaker, United States Army Air Force, had dominated the German Air Force in the Mediterranean Theatre and were attempting to destroy the L. of C. of the German forces in Italy. Eaker was also responsible for air operations in support of the Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany by aircraft based in Italy. These were the heavy day bombers of the United States Fifteenth Air Force which formed not only the greater part of Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force but was also a part of the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe, which were commanded by General Carl Spaatz, U.S.A.A.F. and included the United States Eighth Air Force operating from the United Kingdom. Though Eaker's responsibility for United States Fifteenth Air Force was first of all its contribution to the Combined Bomber Offensive as directed by Spaatz, there were conditions in which Eaker might use the heavy

* The Gari is often referred to as the Rapido in contemporary records but we follow the correct topographical terminology. The Rapido rises in the mountains north of Cassino and joins the Gari just south of Cassino town. The united streams are then called the Gari.

Digitized by Google

day bombers in support of the Italian campaign. This he had done when the weather en route to or over distant strategic targets was bad. But regardless of the weather he could use the heavy day bombers in an emergency, for example when at Anzio the Germans tried to drive 6th U.S. Corps back into the sea, and at Cassino when very heavy bombing was required to help the land forces in a most difficult offensive. Both tasks were given overriding priority and to both the United States Fifteenth Air Force gave its whole weight.* Yet its prime function remained the support of the Combined Bomber Offensive, Operation 'Pointblank'.

This came about because the process, begun during 'Pointblank', of crippling the German Air Force and the industries supporting it, was not progressing fast enough, and because its success had come to be regarded as a prerequisite for 'Overlord'.[3] It was also necessary to reduce the alarming casualties in the United States Eighth Air Force which, if unchecked, might make daylight operations over Germany unprofitable. Because day bombing operations from Italy would split the enemy's fighter and anti-aircraft defences, and because he had been transferring some of his aircraft and associated industries from heavily bombed north-western areas of Germany to within reasonable range of Italian air bases, the establishment of a force of heavy day bombers in Italy was the most promising course to follow and the acquisition of air bases from which to operate became one of the objects of the Italian campaign.

Thus, on 1st November 1943, the United States Fifteenth Air Force was formed under Major-General James H. Doolittle, U.S.A.A.F. who, after some time, placed his headquarters at Bari near the Foggia airfields where the heavy bombers were to be based. At first there were to be six groups of them, two of long-range fighters, and half a group of reconnaissance aircraft. By 31st March 1944 this force was to be expanded to 21 groups of heavy day bombers, seven of long-range fighters and one complete group of reconnaissance aircraft. There was some delay in fulfilling the programme but by April 1944 all the groups of heavy day bombers had arrived, and the reconnaissance group was complete. By May all the fighter groups had arrived but unfortunately only the earlier type of Lightning, with Spitfires and Kittyhawks, were available as escorts. In June the new Lightnings, Mustangs, and Thunderbolts, all with longer range, had arrived and the United States Fifteenth Air Force was ready to strike at distant targets with much stronger long-range fighter escorts, and with greater effect.

With this short introduction we have now to tell the story of the

---

* The story of all the naval, army and air operations which are summarised above has been told in *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V, (H.M.S.O. 1973).

Digitized by Google

operations of the Allies in the Mediterranean Theatre from the moment when the offensive was renewed in Italy on 11th May 1944 until the unconditional surrender of the German forces in Italy on 2nd May 1945. This story has the first claim on our necessarily limited space. We cannot treat the operations in the Balkans, Greece, and the Aegean so fully and we refer only briefly to the impressive story of the Italian Resistance.

It is perhaps useful to recall that the campaign in Italy was governed by the decisions taken by the President, the Prime Minister, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Quebec Conference in August 1943. These decisions, which were never changed, related to the whole conduct of the war against the Axis in Europe and they were expressed in the Final Report by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to the President and the Prime Minister at Quebec:[4]

> 'OPERATION 'OVERLORD' [the invasion of Normandy]
>
> 11(a) This operation will be the primary United States–British ground and air effort against the Axis in Europe. (Target date the 1st May, 1944) . . .
> (c) As between Operation 'Overlord' and operations in the Mediterranean, where there is a shortage of resources, available resources will be distributed and employed with the main object of ensuring the success of 'Overlord' . . .
>
> OPERATIONS IN ITALY
>
> 14(a) First phase. The elimination of Italy as a belligerent [achieved September 1943] and the establishment of air bases, in the Rome area, and, if feasible, further north.
> (b) Second phase. Seizure of Sardinia and Corsica. [The Germans completed a voluntary evacuation of both islands by 4th October 1943].
> (c) Third phase. The maintenance of unremitting pressure on German forces in Northern Italy and the creation of the conditions required for 'Overlord' [so far as the Allied forces in Italy were concerned, by preventing the Germans transferring forces from Italy to the West] and of a situation favourable for the eventual entry of our forces, including the bulk of the re-equipped French Army and Air Force into Southern France . . .'

It is not easy for Allies to devise a workable grand strategy, and it is no easier to devise the lesser strategy based on the grand design and then to put it into action. After the Quebec Conference an intense debate began on whether to launch operations against southern or western France in addition to the operations in Italy. The British and American Chiefs of Staff held different views and at times discussion was heated and blunt. On 2nd July 1944 a decision

Digitized by Google

was taken to launch an operation (at first code-named 'Anvil', and later 'Dragoon') against southern France during August 1944. In this decision American strategic views prevailed and the whole purpose and value of the campaign in Italy were called into question. As the debate did not jeopardise Alexander's operations until July we defer a summary of it until Chapter VI.*

While the 2nd U.S. Corps and later the New Zealand Corps strove in vain to break the Gustav Line in the Cassino sector, and while the 6th U.S. Corps held the Anzio beachhead against the attacks of General von Mackensen's *AOK 14*, Alexander reviewed his operations in general. The results of his thinking were expressed in an appreciation written by his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General A. F. Harding, which he sent to General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson on 22nd February, and also to Admiral Sir John Cunningham (C.-in-C. Mediterranean), Major-General John K. Cannon U.S.A.A.F. (Commander of the Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force) and Generals Leese and Clark.[5]

In this appreciation Alexander defined his object as 'To force the enemy to commit the maximum number of divisions to operations in Italy at the time Overlord is launched.' Alexander knew no more than that the target date for 'Overlord' was May 1944, and he could not foresee the failure of the New Zealand Corps' second attack at Cassino. He concluded that 'to contain and draw in German formations that might otherwise be used against Overlord, operations in Italy must presumably begin at least 15–21 days before Overlord is launched.' He foresaw that his present operations might result in one of three situations:

> 'Case A. Enemy driven north of Rome . . . Our own advance stopped by a combination of enemy rearguards, demolitions, exhaustion of our troops and administrative limitations, somewhere south of the Rimini–Pisa line.
> Case B. Junction between our main forces and the Anzio bridgehead effected, but the front stabilized by the enemy south of Rome.
> Case C. The front stabilized by the enemy with the force in the Anzio bridgehead still separated from our main forces.'

Alexander believed that Case C was the most likely to occur, and the events of March justified his belief.

Alexander had at his disposal one division, the 78th, which had not been recently in battle, and he expected to receive 88th U.S.

---

* A full account will be found in *Grand Strategy*, Volumes V and VI by John Ehrman (H.M.S.O. 1956) and a summary of the early stages of the debate is to be found in *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V, (H.M.S.O. 1973).

Digitized by Google

Division early in March. All his other divisions were tired and battle-worn, and they required a period out of the line during which they could rest, absorb reinforcements, and reorganize. The Germans were in much the same state, and it was unlikely that they would be able to begin an offensive without a period of reorganization.

Alexander then set down some desiderata for future operations. German rail communications must be attacked as heavily as possible by the air forces and by saboteurs in order to prevent reinforcements and supplies reaching the German armies to replace the wastage caused by the present operations. Then:

> 'It is obvious that the most effective way of making the enemy draw on other theatres for troops for employment in Italy is not merely to push back the enemy's line, but to destroy enemy formations in Italy to such an extent that they must be replaced from elsewhere to avoid a rout. Tactical plans should therefore be designed to bring about situations in which enemy formations can be destroyed or so reduced in strength as to be non-effective, rather than for the primary purpose of gaining ground.'

This was not to say that features of the ground were no longer tactical objectives. He deduced from the winter's fighting that it was necessary to have a local superiority of three to one in infantry if there was to be a reasonable chance of effectively penetrating organized defences in Italian terrain. (A superiority of six to one was held to be necessary by several commanders in France and Flanders during World War I.) Tanks were only supporting weapons in this terrain but:

> 'To get the full benefit of our superiority in artillery we must make our major effort where we can deploy a large mass of artillery, that is the widest valleys that lead to the enemy's vitals. For a large scale offensive the ideal would be to amass a force of 12 divisions behind the area selected for penetration. Two corps each of three infantry divisions and one armoured brigade, and each operating on a one divisional front, should be sufficient to ensure penetration on a wide enough front and to the depth necessary for exploitation by two other corps each of two infantry and one armoured divisions.'

At the time of his appreciation Alexander had three armoured and nineteen infantry divisions, and he believed that he would require a total of twenty-eight and a half divisions to provide his ideal offensive force of ten infantry and two armoured divisions, and two armoured brigades, together with a number of reserve divisions sufficient to enable him to preserve the momentum of the offensive by constantly committing fresh divisions. He would require the new divisions by 15th April if they were to have a minimum period in a

Digitized by Google

defensive role to acclimatise before operations began early in May. To mix American and British divisions in one corps, as had been unavoidable in 6th U.S. Corps, caused complications in organisation and administration, and Alexander wished to re-constitute his corps wholly of American and American-equipped troops and of British and British-equipped troops. To achieve this he intended to regroup his Armies so that 8th would contain only British, Commonwealth, and Polish formations, while 5th would have only American and French formations.*

So much for the armies. Of the air Alexander wrote:

> 'Our air superiority is a battle winning factor. Land operations must be framed to take full advantage of it and tactical objectives must include the airfield areas required to give air forces the greatest scope. The maintenance of air superiority is the first essential to success in the land battle.
>
> The shape of the country and the alignment of its communications, combined with the dependence of the enemy on supplies from Germany, should enable air action against the enemy's communications, combined with the consumption of material against our land forces, to be decisive, provided that it is prolonged and continuous.
>
> In addition, once the major offensive begins the application of total air effort combined with artillery to enemy tactical areas which are suitable air targets will enable land forces to reach their objectives with minimum losses . . .'

Because there would be, at best, enough landing craft to lift only one division, amphibious operations would be confined to the 'purely tactical field very closely connected with the land front.' In the event no amphibious operations were possible, but the threat of landings, which were purely imaginary, was presented so skilfully that Kesselring made dispositions to meet it, to the detriment, as will be described later, of his defensive dispositions as a whole. Administrative requirements would make the ports of Civitavecchia and Leghorn most important objectives if the enemy was driven, or withdrew north of Rome.

Alexander then set down his plan in outline:

(i) A corps of three divisions, under command of Headquarters Allied Central Mediterranean Force, would take over 8th Army's present front, mainly as a defensive sector.

(ii) 8th Army would penetrate at Cassino and advance along Highway 6.

---

* The Polish Corps was organised on British lines and used British equipment. The French Expeditionary Corps used American equipment.

Digitized by Google

(iii) 5th Army would attack from Cisterna, north of the Anzio beachhead, towards Valmontone, and along the axis Ausonia–Esperia–Pico, and along the coastal road, combined with an amphibious operation in the Gaeta area.

There were three novel features in the plan: first, the virtual abandonment of operations on the Adriatic coast; secondly, the use of whole corps on tasks previously attempted by divisions during the winter battles; and thirdly, simultaneous instead of staggered attacks on the main Gustav Line positions. There were also subtle cover and deception plans which we will describe later.

While Alexander had been preparing his appreciation, the British Chiefs of Staff had asked Wilson for an appreciation and an account of his intentions. Thus prompted, Wilson issued a directive to Alexander on 25th February, before he had received Alexander's appreciation. This directive made the offensive on the land merely the complement of an air offensive to deprive the enemy of the ability either to maintain his present positions or to withdraw divisions from Italy in time for 'Overlord'. Alexander was to continue operations without pause and was to link his main force with that at Anzio and to take Rome. When he had read Alexander's appreciation, and received his Staff's opinion that it and the plan were feasible, Wilson dropped his own plan in favour of Alexander's concept of operations. Coincidentally, he received a new directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff on 26th February, giving operations in Italy priority within the Mediterranean.[6] Eisenhower had demanded more assault shipping for 'Overlord' and the American Chiefs of Staff had been brought reluctantly to accept a postponement of 'Anvil' as the only way of meeting Eisenhower's demands. The directive to Wilson, which was approved by the President and the Prime Minister, ran:

> '(i) The campaign in Italy must, until further orders, have overriding priority over all existing and future operations in the Mediterranean and will have first call on all resources, land, sea and air in that theatre.
> (ii) Subject to (i) above, the Allied C.-in-C. Mediterranean Theatre should prepare alternative plans and make such preparations as can be undertaken without prejudice to operations in Italy, for amphibious operations in the Mediterranean with the object of contributing to Overlord by containing and engaging the maximum number of enemy forces. The first of these alternatives should be Anvil. . .'

Alexander was thus able to plan and prepare his Spring offensive (code-named 'Diadem') without interruption. It was Wilson's task to keep the British and American Chiefs of Staff informed of what

Digitized by Google

was going on, and he did this in a series of telegrams beginning on 9th March.[7]

While the British and American Chiefs of Staff agreed that Alexander should renew his offensive they differed sharply on its objectives and on what operations should follow it. On 22nd March the British Chiefs of Staff telegraphed to their American colleagues, through the British Joint Staff Mission '. . . the best way to help Overlord is to engage the enemy as heavily as possible in southern Italy. Our aim should consequently be to capture Rome at the earliest possible date.'[8] On 24th March the American Chiefs of Staff replied:[9]

> 'The U.S. Chiefs of Staff do not agree that the capture of Rome is worth heavy engagement in Italy. After the bridgehead and main front are joined, there will remain in our opinion no further military objectives in Italy which justify the the time-consuming and costly effort required to attain them . . .'

They argued that when Alexander's main forces and 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio had linked, he should consolidate whatever line he had gained, maintain pressure to contain as many German formations as possible, and prepare to land a force in southern France. On 28th March the British Chiefs of Staff re-stated their views:[10]

> 'We must be . . . prepared to meet the eventuality of the Germans deciding to fight to the limit for Rome, and north of Rome, not because we think it essential to capture Rome for Rome's sake (although this would be a big political prize), nor because we wish to have the Rome–Ancona–Florence airfields (although these would considerably extend the range of our fighter escorts into Germany). The governing military consideration is that we should contain, in whatever place and by whatever means seems best, the maximum German forces away from Overlord . . .'

The Prime Minister took one view of Rome when he wore the spectacles of the statesman and politician and another when he wore those of the Minister of Defence. Through the former Rome appeared a glittering prize, while through the latter an objective of no vital military importance. Alexander looked on Rome as a means of making the Germans fight and was of one mind with the Prime Minister on the objective of the coming offensive as is shown by two signals sent just before the offensive opened. On 11th May Alexander cabled to Mr. Churchill, 'Everything is now ready, all plans and preparations are complete. Our object is the destruction of the enemy south of Rome and we have every hope and every intention of doing that.'[11] Mr. Churchill replied, 'All our thoughts and hopes are with

Digitized by Google

you in what I trust and believe will be a decisive battle, fought to a finish and having for its object the destruction and ruin of the armed forces of the enemy south of Rome.'

Alexander issued very little paper in connection with his Spring offensive. Instead he held conferences at Caserta on 28th February, 2nd April, and 1st May, sending out careful agenda for each which outlined his intentions and he informed the commanders and staff officers who would attend of the points upon which decisions would be taken, and of the questions which they should be ready to answer. In this way problems were solved on the spot and planning went forward smoothly and effectively.

In his first conference on 28th February, attended by both Army Commanders, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Commander Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force, and a Naval liaison officer, Alexander expounded his appreciation and pointed out in particular that there were only two places for large scale operations where the Allied forces could use their air and armoured superiority, and which led to vital objectives.[12] These places were the Liri valley and Anzio, and he intended to concentrate his forces at these points. To do so, the inter-Army boundary would have to be changed to make 8th Army responsible for the former and 5th Army the latter. Some re-grouping would take place at once in which 2nd U.S. Corps would relieve 5th Division which would move to Anzio to release the depleted 56th Division. The British-equipped New Zealand Corps and the Polish Corps would relieve the U.S.-equipped French Expeditionary Corps in its positions facing Mts Cairo (Pt 1669) and Cifalco (Pt 947). Operations in progress would be continued to capture Mt Cassino which dominated the Liri valley from the north and to make a bridgehead across the River Gari which obstructed its entrance from the east; and, at Anzio, to make the bridgehead safe and then to capture Cisterna and Carroceto, which would be needed for successful break-out operations. For the main offensive:

'(i) 8 Army would concentrate maximum strength for a thrust up the Liri valley.
(ii) 5 Army would prepare for an attack from the bridgehead [Anzio] directed on Valmontone to cut off German forces withdrawing from the main front.'

Alexander was thinking about 5th Army in the terms of his appreciation of the 22nd, namely:[13]

> 'If sufficient troops are available after providing adequate forces for the offensives from the bridgehead [Anzio] and up the Liri valley, smaller scale attacks on the axis Ausonia–Esperia–Pico, and along the coastal road, combined with an amphibious

Digitized by Google

operation in the Gaeta area, would pin down and possibly destroy the enemy forces south of the Liri valley.'

It is evident that he saw 5th Army's stroke from the Anzio beachhead towards Valmontone as that Army's chief task in the main offensive. At this conference Alexander could give no date for beginning the main offensive but said that the earliest possible date was to be aimed at. Neither Leese nor Clark had much to say at this stage. Leese declared that he was ready to take over his new sector at any time, and that 13th Corps would be ready to take over from the New Zealand Corps when that Corps had finished its operations. Clark pointed out that 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio could not undertake offensive operations at present and he gave an account of the losses of the American and British divisions there. As for the battle at Cassino he estimated that the chances of success or failure were equal.

Sir Brian Robertson summed up some administrative matters. He believed that it was just possible to maintain a force of 28 divisions, in view of the good performance of the Naples group of ports.* He based his calculations on a force of sixteen British divisions (or their equivalent) at a daily rate of 620 tons of maintenance stores per division and 12 American and French divisions (or their equivalent) at a daily rate of 730 tons per division.[15] He added 12½ per cent of these tonnages to go towards reserves, as well as a daily quantity of 10,500 tons required for essential needs of the Italian population. At Anzio the reserves of stores were low for security and inadequate for an offensive. More craft would be required if stocks in the beachhead were to be increased. Upon this Captain A. L. Besant R.N. remarked that the average daily discharge at Anzio was between 3,000–3,300 tons, but that Sir John Cunningham believed that for planning purposes the basic rate should be fixed at 2,500 tons, and that this rate could not be maintained without difficulty.†

---

* Some illustrative figures are:[14]

	Cargo (tons) discharged in Italian ports		
	Heel ports (all cargo) (a)	*Naples group of ports (b)*	
		All cargo	*British cargo*
January 1944	346,494	Figures unrecorded	98,379
February	318,757	" "	144,178
March	312,234	527,316	252,006
April	315,682	516,061	170,799

(a) Taranto, Gallipoli, Brindisi, Monopoli, Barletta.
(b) Naples, Salerno, Castellammare, Torre Annunziata.
See Maps 2 and 12

† In fact the amount of cargo discharged at Anzio was:[16]

	Tons	*Approximate daily average*
22nd January to 20th February	97,669	3,255
March	158,274	5,105
April	97,658	3,255
May	131,424	4,238

Sir John Cunningham's estimate of 2,500 tons daily was therefore greatly improved upon.

Digitized by Google

For the air General Cannon pointed out that the tasks of the Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force were in order of priority:

1. Targets in south Germany which were part of the Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany.
2. Railway targets in the Po valley.
3. Co-operation with the M.A.T.A.F.
4. Targets in the Balkans.

He said that because he had a call upon all or part of M.A.S.A.F. in emergency, and taking into account the strength of his own Tactical Air Force, air power was sufficient for any demands that might be made. He suggested that immediate operational control should be exercised by U.S. XII Air Support Command over Italy west of the central Apennines and by the Desert Air Force over Italy east of the central Apennines and over the Balkans. His own headquarters was not organised to exercise immediate operational control. It would be unwise to move it forward from its position alongside Alexander's headquarters.

After this conference, Headquarters A.A.I. issued orders for regrouping on 5th March.[17] 5th Corps was to take control of the Adriatic front and would be an independent Corps under the direct control of Headquarters A.A.I. 8th Army would take control of the central sector extending from Bomba to the meeting of the rivers Gari and Liri on the south side of the Liri valley. 5th Army would retain control of the front from this point to the sea and of the Anzio beachhead. The following boundaries were fixed and are shown on *Map 2:*

Between 5th Corps and 8th Army: the road running northwards from Castiglione to Tornareccio, and then a line westwards through Bomba to Palena.

Between 8th Army and 5th Army[18]: From the junction of Highways 6 and 7 (north of Capua), west of Highway 6 to Mignano, along the railway to Rocca d'Evandro station, down the road to the meeting of the rivers Gari and Liri, thence along the Liri and Sacco rivers (inclusive to 5th Army) until north of Sgurgola. The boundary then crossed the river Sacco, ran north of Segni, Artena and Frascati to a point south of Highway 6 about 3 miles east of Rome, whence it circled clear of the city and turned northwards after crossing Highway 3.

The regrouping of 5th and 8th Armies began at once but went on more slowly than Alexander expected. This is not surprising. Formations in the line had to be withdrawn in turn for rest, re-training and re-equipment; formations from outside the Theatre had to be received, given experience in the line and trained for their particular tasks: and all formations had to be brought back into the

Digitized by Google

line on a carefully planned programme so that they reached their appointed positions ready for the offensive without alerting the Germans as to what was afoot. The whole complex jig-saw was devised and controlled by H.Q. I.A.A.I. under Harding's direction.

Regrouping was not merely a matter, however complicated, of moving troops and their equipment by sea, road and rail. Behind the fighting formations the administrative lay out had to be changed. New supply routes and administrative areas had to be organised in order to avoid congestion of administrative traffic and installations of two armies on routes and in areas which had hitherto been used only by one. The new organisation, under which formations were composed of American and American-equipped troops on the one hand, and of British and British-equipped troops on the other, made it necessary to re-stock administrative installations either with American or British supplies, stores and equipment, except for items in common use. By the end of March it was clear that the whole programme was unlikely to be completed before 23rd April, and if a week or ten days were added to allow for accidents and finishing touches, all preparations for the offensive would not be complete until a date between 3rd and 5th May.[19] It is impossible to enter into details of the great reorganisation but it will be useful to list the formations which were moved from outside Italy during the period of regrouping, and then to give in outline the order of battle of the Allied armies on the eve of the offensive.

REINFORCEMENTS FROM OUTSIDE ITALY

Reinforcing Formation	Arriving from	Operational by	Allotted to
88th U.S. Division	North Africa	February	2nd U.S. Corps.
4th Moroccan Mountain Division	North Africa	February	French Expeditionary Corps.
6th Armoured Division (British)	North Africa	April	13th Corps.
4th Division (British)	Middle East	April	13th Corps.
10th Indian Division	Middle East	April	5th Corps.
H.Q. 4th U.S. Corps.	North Africa	April	5th Army Reserve.
85th U.S. Division	North Africa	April	2nd U.S. Corps.
9th Armoured Brigade (British)	Middle East	May	13th Corps.
25th Tank Brigade (British)	Middle East	May	13th Corps.
7th Armoured Brigade (British)	Middle East	May	5th Corps.
6th South African Armoured Division	Middle East	May	8th Army Reserve.
1st French Infantry Division	North Africa	May	French Expeditionary Corps.

In March, 46th and 56th Divisions (British) were withdrawn from Italy to rest and refit in Middle East.

Digitized by Google

5th ARMY. OUTLINE ORDER OF BATTLE. 10th MAY 1944

Commander: Lieutenant-General Mark W. Clark

2nd U.S. Corps (Major-General Geoffrey T. Keyes):
85th U.S. Division (Major-General John B. Coulter).
88th U.S. Division (Major-General John E. Sloan).
1st U.S. Armoured Group (Three tank battalions).

6th U.S. Corps (Major-General Lucien K. Truscott):
1st U.S. Armoured Division (Major-General Ernest N. Harmon).
3rd U.S. Division (Major-General John W. O'Daniel).
34th U.S. Division (Major-General Charles W. Ryder).
45th U.S. Division (Major-General William W. Eagles).
1st British Division (Major-General J. L. I. Hawkesworth).
5th British Division (Major-General P. G. S. Gregson-Ellis).
1st U.S. Special Service Force (Colonel Robert T. Frederick).
509th U.S. Parachute Battalion.

French Expeditionary Corps (General A. Juin):
1st French Infantry Division (Major-General D. Brosset).
2nd Moroccan Infantry Division (Major-General A. W. Dody).
3rd Algerian Infantry Division (Major-General de Goislard de Monsabert).
4th Moroccan Mountain Division (Major-General F. Sevez).
1st, 3rd, 4th Groups of Tabors, Moroccan Goums (Brigadier-General A. Guillaume).

Army Reserve
H.Q. 4th U.S. Corps (Major-General Willis D. Crittenberger).
36th U.S. Division (Major-General Fred L. Walker).
Italian Brigade Group.

8th ARMY. OUTLINE ORDER OF BATTLE. 10th MAY 1944

Commander: Lieutenant-General Sir Oliver Leese

10th Corps (Lieutenant-General Sir Richard McCreery):
2nd New Zealand Division (Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg).
24th Guards Brigade (Brigadier A. F. L. Clive).
2nd Parachute Brigade (Brigadier C. H. V. Pritchard).
12th South African Motorized Brigade (Brigadier R. J. Palmer).
Italian Motorized Brigade Group.

13th Corps (Lieutenant-General S. C. Kirkman):
6th Armoured Division (Major-General V. Evelegh).
4th Division (Major-General A. D. Ward).
78th Division (Major-General C. F. Keightley).
8th Indian Division (Major-General D. Russell).
1st Canadian Armoured Brigade (Brigadier W. C. Murphy).

Digitized by Google

1st Canadian Corps (Lieutenant-General E. L. M. Burns):
5th Canadian Armoured Division (Major-General B. M. Hoffmeister).
1st Canadian Division (Major-General C. Vokes).
25th Tank Brigade (Brigadier J. N. Tetley).

2nd Polish Corps (Lieutenant-General W. Anders):
3rd Carpathian Division (Major-General Duch).
5th Kresowa Division (Major-General Sulik).
2nd Polish Armoured Brigade (Major-General Rakowski).

Army Reserve
6th South African Armoured Division (Major-General W. H. Evered Poole).

5th Corps (Lieutenant-General C. W. Allfrey).
4th Indian Division (Major-General A. W. W. Holworthy).
10th Indian Division (Major-General D. Reid).
23rd Armoured Brigade (Brigadier R. A. Hermon).

We have discussed the administration, including maintenance and supply, of air forces in the Mediterranean Theatre in the fifth volume of this History (Chapter XII, pages 403–408). To recapitulate very briefly, since February 1944 the Royal Air Force and the United States Army Air Force had each had its own distinct administrative organisation. For the Royal Air Force the organisation was Royal Air Force Mediterranean and Middle East, headed by Air Marshal Sir John Slessor who was also the principal Deputy C.-in-C. of Mediterranean Allied Air Forces. The United States Army Air Force's organisation was Army Air Forces, Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, headed by Lieutenant-General Ira C. Eaker who was also Air C.-in-C. of Mediterranean Allied Air Forces. The actions of the two administrative organisations were co-ordinated but they were not combined.

A marked difference existed in the chains of administrative command by which each national air force performed its administrative functions, including maintenance and supply. The American chain was complicated and we need not follow it in detail. It is sufficient to say that the largest American *formation*, entitled a United States Air Force (e.g. United States Fifteenth Air Force) included an administrative component called an Air Force Service Command. An Air Force Service Command's Commanding General reported to Army Air Forces, Mediterranean Theatre of Operations but also enjoyed direct access to the highest Air Force Service Command at Patterson Field in the United States.

In the Royal Air Force in Italy, when wholly Royal Air Force formations were concerned, the commander of each dealt with Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East and with No. 214 (Maintenance) Group R.A.F. through his administrative staff. A

Digitized by Google

special case however was that of a Royal Air Force formation which was part of an Allied Air Force. In Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force, No. 205 Group R.A.F. was catered for administratively by Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East, and by No. 214 (Maintenance) Group R.A.F. Royal Air Force formations and units, which were included in United States XII Tactical Air Command, were looked after administratively by the Desert Air Force which depended upon Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East and No. 214 (Maintenance) Group R.A.F.

In Italy the Royal Air Force depended upon the Army to carry most of its requirements in bulk to railhead and roadhead, and for onward carriage from these points the Royal Air Force as a rule used its own transport columns.

At the eastern end of the Mediterranean, Headquarters Royal Air Force, Middle East was largely self-administering but came under Royal Air Force Mediterranean and Middle East for overall administrative policy and direction.

The administrative organization so broadly sketched above proved adequate for all requirements until the end of the campaign in the Mediterranean Theatre. Above all it was sufficiently flexible to admit of modification when special circumstances produced special needs.

On 25th March Alexander issued papers for study before his next conference on 2nd April.[20] By this time informal discussions between Army and Corps Commanders had led to a rapid development of Alexander's initial ideas and pressure from the administrative staffs had led to a detailed appreciation being issued of the situations which might arise when 5th and 8th Armies linked with 6th U.S. Corps from Anzio. This appreciation is not relevant to the Spring offensive but shows that Alexander was already considering in some detail its sequel, a general advance to the line Pisa–Rimini. One important paper gave quite a firm shape to the coming offensive. Alexander broke down the Army tasks into six parts to which he gave no chronological order. These were:

'*Eighth Army*

(a) The break through of the main position the enemy is holding at the time the offensive begins.
(b) The follow up to the next position which the enemy holds in strength, which may or may not be east of Valmontone.

Fifth Army

(c) Capture of the Ausonia defile.
(d) The advance through Esperia and to the south of the Liri river to the next position which the enemy holds in strength.

Digitized by Google

(e) The break out from the Anzio bridgehead, which will presumably include the capture of the Cisterna area.
(f) The advance from the Anzio bridgehead on Valmontone.'

The first object of the offensive was to join hands with 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio. A successful break out from the bridgehead, if it went far enough, would compel the enemy to withdraw from the main front. But to make sure of the junction with 6th U.S. Corps it was vital to break through the enemy's main front and therefore 8th Army's break through would have priority if any conflict occurred between the requirements of the two armies. It would be best to attack simultaneously on the fronts of 8th Army, 5th Army, and 6th U.S. Corps, but this would split the air effort and prevent its concentration on either the main front or at Anzio. Alexander therefore argued that it would be best to begin with the break out at Anzio, and to follow with simultaneous attacks on the main front by 8th Army north and 5th Army south of the River Liri. 5th and 8th Armies would continue their operations to attract all the German reserves, so that a further thrust by 6th U.S. Corps might well be decisive and lead to the destruction of all German forces between Anzio and the main front.

Alexander then proposed the following timings:

(i) D day — Attack by 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio to break out of its beachhead. Then a pause.
(ii) D + 3 — Attack by 8th Army to break into the main German positions, and by 5th Army to capture the Ausonia defile.
(iii) — 8th and 5th Army would continue their operations until they were seriously checked or a pause became necessary for other reasons. Check or pause would be named Y Day.
(iv) Y + 1 — 6th U.S. Corps would resume its operations.
(v) — 8th and 5th Armies would renew their attacks as quickly as possible and continue simultaneously until a decision was reached.

The target date for beginning the offensive was between 3rd and 5th May. 8th Army would complete its concentration by 25th April, 5th Army by 23rd April, and a few days would be allowed for finishing touches and for unforeseen delays. These dates would take advantage of the moon which would be new on 22nd April and full on 8th May.

Besides the plan for his main offensive Alexander made a plan to drop by parachute, land from the sea, and infiltrate by land some forty-two detachments, numbering about 930 officers and men of British, American, French, and Italian Special Service troops. Their object was to attack rail and road convoys in an area marked on the

Digitized by Google

north by Parma, Bologna, and Faenza and on the south by Rome and Sulmona (*see Map* 1). The detachments were also to encourage Italian partisans to rise against the Germans. This plan, however, was cancelled on 2nd April due to shortage of transport aircraft.

Alexander's conference on 2nd April was large and at it the plans for the Spring offensive were settled except for some details.*[21] Alexander did not alter the tasks of the armies or the six parts into which he had divided them in his paper of 25th March. He declared however that 5th Corps would hold its sector with the fewest troops possible and would follow up vigorously if the enemy withdrew. Discussion showed that 5th Army would be ready to attack from 25th April but that 8th Army would not be ready before 10th May owing to a need to complete its rehearsals. All agreed that 10th May should be fixed provisionally as D day.

Alexander then said that three courses were open:

'(i) To attack simultaneously on the main front and at Anzio.
(ii) To lead with an attack on the main front.
(iii) To lead with an attack at Anzio.'

The disadvantage of the first course was that the air effort would be split between two operations, and of the third that the German defences encompassing the beachhead were strong and might hold up 6th U.S. Corps' attack at an early stage. He therefore preferred the second course because the whole air effort could be concentrated on the main front, and 6th U.S. Corps' attack need not be launched until there was a chance of it being decisive. Alexander thus changed his opinion of 25th March that the offensive should begin with an attack by 6th U.S. Corps. Leese and Clark agreed with his new proposal, and Clark said that he could reinforce 6th U.S. Corps with a division. Cannon stated that, while he could give air support simultaneously to attacks at Anzio and on the main front, the air forces were suffering considerable attrition and air formations were being withdrawn to take part in 'Overlord' and in operations by South East Asia Command. Alexander then declared that the battle on the main front would begin the offensive and might last up to ten days. 6th U.S. Corps must be ready from D + 4 to begin its attack at twenty-four hours' notice.

Sir Brian Robertson dealt with the administrative side of the offensive. There would be no great administrative difficulties in the

* Besides the Army Commanders and their Staff Officers the following were among those who attended: the C.O.S. and the C.A.O., A.C.M.F., the Air Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Allied Air Forces and his Deputy, Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, the Commanders of Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force, of U.S. XII Air Support Command, and the Senior Air Staff Officer Desert Air Force, with the Flag Officer Western Italy, Rear-Admiral G. A. V. Morse R.N.

Digitized by Google

main attack by 5th and 8th Armies, and indeed he expected none at all as far as Valmontone. There would however be much congestion in the forward areas, and reserve units and all that were not essential must be held well back. During the advance northward from Valmontone 5th Army would be supplied by sea and road, 8th Army by road and rail. Formations would have to practice administrative austerity during their pursuit of the enemy.

Alexander's Army Commanders were now able to give a firm shape to their partly formed plans for the offensive, but he himself was involved in an unfortunate controversy. On 21st March Wilson had sent to the British and American Chiefs of Staff an appreciation which was ambiguously worded.[22] In one paragraph he wrote that Alexander would be unable to complete his preparations for the Spring offensive before 15th April and in the next paragraph he referred to the 'offensive due to start on 15th April.' Mr. Churchill in his accustomed manner hastily assumed that 15th April was a firm date. On 27th March Wilson sent a further signal saying that Alexander's firm forecast of the opening date was now 15th May. Unfortunately at this time in March the debate on Mediterranean strategy between the two sets of Chiefs of Staff was becoming acrimonious, and on 29th March Dill reported that the American Chiefs of Staff 'felt that delay in resuming full scale offensive in Italy was too great to be acceptable.'[23] They felt that this delay might give the Germans time in which to rest their troops and prepare to meet Alexander's attack. The American Chiefs of Staff believed that 'at this stage of the war time is the one thing which we cannot afford to give the enemy.' On 1st April Mr. Churchill, without consulting his Chiefs of Staff, sent Alexander a personal signal:[24]

> 'I cannot tell you how staggered I was when your renewed attack was put off for a whole month. The American Chiefs of Staff seem equally or even more upset, and apparently they think it is some dark scheme to kill Anvil in the interests of some campaign in the north of Italy.'

Happily the Prime Minister had already granted Alexander's request to fly to England for consultations. Nevertheless on 2nd April Alexander replied firmly:[25]

> 'I am very distressed that anyone should think the date of my coming offensive is dictated by any but purely operational reasons . . . I have already asked if the date I proposed was that best suited to Overlord, but up to now have received no answer . . .'

Digitized by Google

Wilson who had unwittingly caused the disturbance kept quiet. As Brooke remarked of him at about this time but in another context: '. . . he was a tough old specimen and he just let Winston's abuse run over him like water off a duck's back,' whereas in July Brooke wrote of Alexander, 'He is the most delightful person and most attractive, but I am afraid entirely innocent of any understanding of the politicians' methods.'[26] However this may have been, Alexander, on 11th April, convinced the Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff that his plans and timings were sound.[27] Mr. Churchill said 'that he was agreeable to the date now proposed for the offensive in Italy – which would harmonize well with "Overlord".' The American Chiefs of Staff did not refer again to the date of the offensive although they continued to question British Mediterranean strategy. Planning in Italy went steadily on and the agenda for Alexander's final conference on 1st May filled no more than a single sheet of paper.[28]

At this conference the remaining decisions were soon taken. D day was fixed as 11th May at 11 p.m. and would be postponed only on account of bad weather. Postponements would be for periods of 24 hours and the first postponement, if necessary, would be decided not later than 4 p.m. on 11th May. 6th U.S. Corps was to be ready to break out from D + 4 and it would be ordered to do so when the second line of German defences on the main front had been breached. It was hoped that the air forces would be sufficient to meet all the demands of 5th and 8th Armies but if not, 8th Army would have the first call on air action and 6th U.S. Corps the second. Alexander, on the advice of Harding, revised his estimate, given on 2nd April, of a ten days' battle to one of between fourteen and twenty-one days. The new estimate was based on the Intelligence staff's belief that reinforcements and supplies had been reaching the Germans in satisfactory quantities in spite of the air forces' great efforts to wreck their L. of C.

It now remained for Headquarters A.A.I. to issue an operation order and this short document appeared on 5th May. It will be summarized in Chapter II.

We have described in some detail how Alexander brought his Spring offensive from a conception to a final plan because the process illustrates a development in his method of command. When he commanded 18th Army Group in North Africa his principal subordinates were Anderson (1st Army), Montgomery (8th Army), Fredendall, Patton, and Bradley (2nd U.S. Corps), Juin (French North African Land Forces) and Koeltz (19th French Corps). He knew Montgomery, but he had to learn what were the abilities and personalities of the others and while doing so he kept a firm hand on

Digitized by Google

all of them including Montgomery, issuing precise orders and instructions. Before the invasion of Sicily he took a definite part in shaping the plan, but after that the battle to be fought on the island seemed scarcely to need close control by Army Group H.Q. He left his Army Commanders, Montgomery and Patton, very much to their own devices, and indeed allowed Montgomery to do too much as he pleased. When the Allied forces first landed in Italy Clark and Montgomery fought on opposite sides of the Italian peninsula guided by Alexander's very general directives. When however a tactical crisis occurred at Salerno, Alexander intervened at once, not to interfere with the direction of the battle by Clark, McCreery, and Dawley, but within his proper sphere as an Army Group Commander, by ensuring that his subordinates' resolution did not fail, by directing reinforcements of troops to the scene, and by obtaining a weighty reinforcement in the form of a tremendous tactical onslaught by almost the entire strategic and tactical air forces. During the winter of 1943–44 Alexander kept a close eye on the fighting, and when in February 1944 the chances of success or failure at Cassino seemed even and stalemate at Anzio was almost certain, he decided to mount an Army Group offensive, planned and firmly controlled by himself. He imposed no absolute solution of problems and no inflexible plan upon his subordinates. Instead he set clearly before them the problems, the possible solutions, and the solutions which he preferred. Then, in discussion, he led his Commanders to see the general situation as he saw it, to understand and accept his solutions and plans. He now knew Clark, Leese, and Juin well, and the Corps Commanders also. He confidently left detailed planning to them and yet saw to it that every plan fitted into his master design. It was a successful method, very much in accord with his own firm, yet tactful and diplomatic, personality. It is interesting to speculate upon the fields in which Alexander might have used his talents if his successful career in World War I had not confirmed his youthful and romantic predilection for the profession of arms.

The Allied Intelligence Staffs had deduced correctly from evidence of various kinds that Kesselring, and indeed his superiors as well, feared that the Allies might again land from the sea behind the German positions.[29] Kesselring's fears were all the livelier because of his experiences during the landings at Salerno in September 1943 and at Anzio in January 1944. He was, moreover, inclined to overestimate the amount of the Allies' assault shipping and to underestimate the difficulty of mounting amphibious operations. Hence he mistakenly credited the Allies with an ability to mount

Digitized by Google

such operations at will. Alexander took advantage of German anxieties by devising a deception plan which played on Kesselring's fears of a landing on the west coast. He aimed to induce his opponent to deploy his reserves on the coast, preferably north of the River Tiber, by disguising the strength of the Allied forces which were concentrating between Minturno and Cassino for the offensive over land.

The deception plan contained three separate but closely connected aims. The first was to simulate near Salerno a strong force which was preparing to land at Civitavecchia on 15th May. The real offensive on the main front was hinted at as a curtain-raiser to the imaginary landing. 1st Canadian Corps and 36th U.S. Division simulated the landing force. The second aim was to conceal the real concentrations of the Canadian Corps behind 13th Corps – the assault force – on the Gari river, and of the greatly reinforced French Expeditionary Corps on the Garigliano opposite the Aurunci Mountains. And the third aim was to suggest that the offensive would be launched in the latter half of May.

On 18th April the Headquarters of the Canadian Corps, of 5th Canadian Armoured Brigade, and of 36th U.S. Division were placed on wireless silence as was Headquarters of 1st Canadian Division a little later. Wireless silence was one of the signs generally accepted by Intelligence on both sides that a formation was moving. Then on 22nd April Canadian and American signal detachments in the neighbourhood of Salerno began to send out a series of bogus messages carefully framed to suggest the concentration of the Canadian and American formations and their preparations for an amphibious operation. On 2nd May the dummy Corps and units of the Royal Navy carried out a signal exercise to suggest that a large landing was being rehearsed in Salerno Bay. Besides a volume of wireless traffic which simulated the normal traffic of a Corps, signals passed between the dummy Corps and branches of Headquarters A.A.I. containing false but interesting information which, it was hoped, would be picked up by German interception units. A Beach Group was posted near Salerno, and the area was plentifully signposted with the maple leaf emblem and Canadian names for roads and camps. The enemy's attention was drawn to the neighbourhood of Civitavecchia by air and beach reconnaissances and by the bombing of RDF stations besides other means. The counterpart of all these activities was the strict enforcement of every measure which experience could suggest or ingenuity could devise to conceal the whereabouts of the Canadian Corps and of the French Expeditionary Corps. Wireless silence was observed by all the formations concerned until it became operationally necessary to break it, and communication was carried on by land telephone, liaison

Digitized by Google

officers, and despatch riders. As an added measure of deception 13th Corps instructed all brigades to prepare and publish to the troops relief and training programmes up to and including 21st May.[30] A vital condition for the success of nearly every part of the deception plan was the Allies' air supremacy which virtually guaranteed the safety of the rearward areas from hostile reconnaissance.

It is seldom that evidence can be found of the success of a deception plan. In this case, however, the Germans' own records suggest that it helped to puzzle them about Allied dispositions, and also helped to ensure that when the Spring offensive opened all the divisions in reserve in Italy were placed to defend the west coast.[31] We illustrate this dual process later in this chapter, and in Chapter II.

(ii)

We have already mentioned a few administrative matters connected with the planning of Alexander's Spring offensive, but at this point it is necessary to take a general view of the administrative organization which was supporting the Allied forces in Italy. Because this is a British history our general view will be almost wholly of the administration of the British forces. The Spring offensive was practicable only because the administrative organization was capable of supporting it.

On 24th October 1943 the problem of administrative control in Italy had been solved by the creation of A.F.H.Q. Advanced Administrative Echelon, usually called by its telegraphic code-name of 'FLAMBO'. This organization, under Sir Brian Robertson as Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of A.F.H.Q., co-ordinated all matters of general administration on the mainland of Italy in the name and with the authority of A.F.H.Q. On the British side it controlled and directed all British general administration on the mainland of Italy. On the American side administration ran through the channel A.F.H.Q. – North African Theatre of Operations U.S. Army (NATOUSA) – Service of Supply NATOUSA, subject to 'FLAMBO's' co-ordination. Below 'FLAMBO' the main administrative organizations were the British Nos. 2 and 3 Districts and the United States Base Sections.*

During the early part of 1944 it became evident that A.F.H.Q. would remain in North Africa until July. It seemed right therefore to merge 'FLAMBO' as soon as possible in the highest Allied Headquarters in Italy, which was Headquarters A.A.I.[32] By the end of February 1944 'FLAMBO' became the administrative part of

* For details of the evolution of 'FLAMBO' the reader is referred to *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V, Chapter XII.

Digitized by Google

Headquarters A.A.I. Sir Brian Robertson became the Chief Administrative Officer at that H.Q., and under him separate but parallel British and American staff sections worked their national administrative systems. This administrative reorganization coupled with Robertson's earlier and far-sighted policy of setting up base installations both at Naples on the west coast and at the Heel ports on the east coast, produced by the spring of 1944 an administrative system that was very efficient, smooth-running, and flexible. Sea-convoys carrying supplies and stores left the 'producer countries', the United States and the United Kingdom, at ten-day intervals and were sailed in such a manner that they arrived in Italian ports at five-day intervals. The convoys might be joined within the Mediterranean by ships from the ports of Middle East and North Africa and were supplemented as necessary by complete convoys from those countries. Ships loaded for the U.S. Army sailed to Naples, those for the U.S. Army Air Force to Bari, and ships loaded for the British forces to the Heel ports and to Naples. The main restriction on the influx of stores and supplies was the capacity of the Italian ports to receive cargo and clear it to base installations. Excellently though the ports worked, the volume of incoming cargo was sometimes too great for them to handle; for example in February 1944 when a glut was adjusted by cancelling one convoy from the United States and another from the United Kingdom. Arrangements for troop-convoys were complicated by a world shortage of passenger ships. The ports of arrival for troop-convoys were Naples and Taranto, and so far as British troops were concerned the aim was to receive three convoys a month from North Africa and two from Middle East. Each convoy might contain ships from the United Kingdom which had staged in the ports of the southern Mediterranean seaboard.*

For British forces, A.A.I. was placed, in April 1944, on a system of long-term maintenance.[33] Stores and supplies were demanded from the producer countries 105 days before the first of the month in which they were required, and the demands were revised 75 days before that date. Various methods of loading ships were used, from bulk stowage of one commodity, for example meat, to stowage in 'corps packs' of several commodities. In December 1943 the General Staff decided that the holdings of stores and supplies for the British forces in Italy should be forty-five days' reserve plus thirty days working margin. By the spring of 1944 substantial stocks had been

* The expression 'troops' is used here to describe officers and men of the three Services.

Digitized by Google

accumulated which are indicated by the figures in the footnote.* Figures by themselves are merely an indication of the size of an undertaking yet two further examples may be useful. Food is consumed at a constant rate whether forces are in action or at rest. By May 1945 the Royal Army Service Corps was feeding 1,487,171 mouths in Italy.[35] These mouths did not belong solely to members of the armed forces but also to a variety of other people such as the crews of merchant vessels which had run out of victuals, co-belligerent Italian forces, and some 287,100 Italian working men and women employed by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Pioneer Corps. Italian mouths did not usually receive a full ration but only articles of diet which were scarce or unobtainable in Italy. The second example comes from Ordnance Stores. To maintain units' entitlements and to ensure the upkeep of their technical equipment the R.A.O.C. had to provide and hold stocks of some 250,000 different items.

The means of communication between the base areas in Italy and the troops in the field were transport by rail, road, sea, and air. By far the most important of these for the main forces were rail and road[36]. The exception was 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio which was maintained entirely by sea until 25th May when 5th Army joined hands with it and supplies and stores began to flow forward along Highway 7. There were three main rail routes, of which one on the east coast was never repaired and restored to action north of Ortona.

---

* A.A.I. Some main holdings on 6th May 1944:[34]

(i) Balanced rations. British troops 49 days
Indian troops 66 days

(ii) Petrol. British and U.S. G.H.Q. Installations:

East Coast	11,653,000 gals M.T.	1,187,000 gals Derv.(a)
West Coast	27,191,000 „ „	1,810,000 „ „
	38,844,000	2,997,000

(a) Diesel Engine Road Vehicle Fuel.

These figures represent approximately 38 days' stocks of M.T. fuel and 23 days' stocks of Derv.

(iii) Artillery Ammunition.

United States	*Rounds per gun*	*'Units of fire' per weapon*
105-mm howitzer	2,690	16
155-mm howitzer	1,067	11
155-mm howitzer M 1	1,474	15
4.5-inch gun	1,657	17
8-inch howitzer	718	7
155-mm gun	209	2
British		*Days' supply at F.F.C. rates*
25-pdr H.E.	2,472	61
4.5-inch gun H.E.	901	36
5-inch gun H.E.	2,097	52
7.2-inch howitzer H.E.	1,451	60
105-mm howitzer M 48	156	5
105-mm howitzer M 54	63	5
155-mm gun	126	3

Digitized by Google

The other two, the line via Mignano through the Liri and Sacco valleys to Rome, and the line Naples–Minturno–Campoleone–Rome, provided ample carrying capacity. There were three main road routes, Highway 7 on the west coast, Highway 6 running through the Liri and Sacco valleys, and Highway 16 on the east coast. Distances were short: the rail haul from the Naples group of ports to railheads was never more than 50 miles until after the capture of Rome, or about 240 miles from the Heel ports; and the longest road haul during the Spring offensive was about 200 miles. There was nothing like 8th Army's 675-mile road haul from Benghazi to Tripoli during the campaign in Africa. On the other hand it was fortunate that the British administrative staffs, services, and units contained many officers and men who had learned their business during the African campaign.

Transport was on the whole plentiful when compared, in the light of distances to be covered, with the amounts which had been available in Africa or during the early stages of the campaign in Italy. The main shortage on rail was at first of locomotives because many, found in Italy, turned out to be worn-out or defective, and it was very difficult to get spare parts and to make repairs[37]. Wagons were adequate in number and in the event the two main lines to Rome provided a lift for 8,700 tons daily. As regards motor transport 8th Army was allotted from 35 to 47 General Transport Companies over and above the transport included in the establishment of units and formations. The Third Line transport 'lift', British and American, was some 26,800 tons. One interesting type of unit, extemporized during the winter of 1943–44, became a permanent part of the R.A.S.C's transport in Italy. This was the Jeep-and-trailer platoon. Fortunately no very great problems arose in the supply of petrol[38]. On average 22 bulk ocean tankers discharged in Italy every month, 60 per cent in the Heel ports, 40 per cent on the west coast, and stocks of petrol became comfortably large.*

---

* (i) Receipts between September 1943 and April 1945 in tons:

Aviation fuel, bulk	1,709,334
Motor fuel, bulk	1,968,606
Aviation fuel, packed	121,295
Motor fuel, packed	380,204
	4,179,439

(ii) Average monthly receipts and issues in tons:

Receipts	Aviation fuel, bulk	122,000
	Motor fuel, bulk	83,000
	Aviation fuel, packed	2,500
	Motor fuel, packed	15,000
Issues	Aviation fuel, bulk	118,000
	Motor fuel, bulk	63,000
	Aviation fuel, packed	9,500
	Motor fuel, packed	50,000

Bulk 1 ton = 300 gallons.
Packed 1 ton = 220 gallons.

Digitized by Google

Consumption was estimated at 49,000 gallons daily for each division. The supply of commodities by rail and road was not, of course, carried on without difficulties. Chief among these was the repair of damage caused by German demolitions and Allied bombing.[39] The expenditure of Bailey bridging was immense. The rate of supply to 8th Army alone was two to three sets a day.

By the beginning of the Spring offensive the humble and precious mule, the most valuable form of transport in mountain warfare, had increased in numbers to 20,927.[40] The animals came from Italy and Sicily, North Africa, and Abyssinia. They were organized in animal transport units on various establishments and of several nationalities, British, American, French North African, Indian, Cypriot, and Italian.*

The mules proved to be staunch to the noises of battle but were apt to take fright at the bright streams of fire left by tracer ammunition. The good beasts are sadly vulnerable and between January and the end of March 1944 casualties occurred at the rate of thirty per cent, a rate which did not decrease. The large quantities of necessary forage were provided by the farmers of the Foggia plain, by Sicily and Middle East. Shoes were scarce until the winter of 1944–45 and until then were made by Italian smiths supervised by a farrier-sergeant of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps.

In the Royal Air Force, even as late as 1944, air transport was the poor relation who received only what was left over after other urgent operational and training demands of all kinds had been satisfied. In the Mediterranean Theatre the poor relation would have been even poorer if there had not been a fairly large number of those reliable American workhorses, the Dakotas. Four organizations for air transport existed in the Theatre but they were not well co-ordinated and so did not make the most economical use of resources. They were:

(a) The U.S. Army Air Force Air Transport Command which flew between the Mediterranean Theatre and overseas countries.

(b) No. 216 Group R.A.F. which was the equivalent in the Mediterranean Theatre of R.A.F. Transport Command in the United Kingdom.

---

* Number of mules in service on 13th May (as recorded at H.Q. A.A.I.)

With British forces	11,683
With American forces	2,484
With French forces	6,760

A Pack Transport Company R.A.S.C. North Africa numbered 338 mules of which 308 normally were load-carriers. A mule, in theory, carries 160 lbs and the 'lift' of the Company, in theory, was about 22 tons. By rule of thumb an infantry brigade operating six or seven miles beyond roadhead, requires three or four Pack Transport Companies to maintain it.

Digitized by Google

(c) Mediterranean Air Transport Service formed of whatever odds and ends the U.S.A.A.F. could find in the Theatre.

(d) United States Twelfth Troop Carrier Command which could sometimes spare part of its resources for air transport in the Mediterranean Theatre.

In February 1944 General Eaker made the following decisions:

(i) Mediterranean Air Transport Service would co-ordinate, through Headquarters Mediterranean Allied Air Force, air transport in the Mediterranean Theatre. With occasional help from U.S. XII Troop Carrier Command it would provide non-scheduled transport flights in the theatre.

(ii) U.S. Army Air Force Air Transport Command and No. 216 Group R.A.F. would provide all scheduled transport flights.

Mediterranean Allied Air Force issued instructions based on Eaker's decisions on 9th April, and on 1st May Mediterranean Air Transport Service became a real Command, subordinate to Army Air Forces, Mediterranean Theatre of Operations. Unfortunately by 1st May a number of U.S. Dakota Squadrons had been withdrawn from the Mediterranean to take part in 'Overlord', and many Dakota aircraft were being compulsorily sent to South East Asia Command and for special duties elsewhere. And so transport aircraft were as scarce as ever, and in Italy only three bases for air supply could be formed to serve the land forces. One of these could handle seventy-five tons of cargo daily, and each of the others ten tons daily.

The term 'maintenance' means the constant flow of reinforcements, supplies and stores from rear bases along the lines of communication by several means of transport to the troops in the front line. The system which served the British land forces in Italy was on the whole orthodox and embodied features which had proved themselves during the campaigns in Africa and in Sicily. From the base areas supplies and stores were carried forward on rail to railheads which were formed as required and as facilities permitted for the Army and its constituent Corps. Trains were usually loaded in bulk rather than in 'packs' of supplies and stores broken down into the kinds and quantities required by particular Corps. Equally, supplies and stores could be carried forward by motor transport to the Army's roadhead. From railheads and roadheads supplies and stores were taken forward by motor transport to Field Maintenance Centres, set up as required by Corps, and thence to Divisional Maintenance Areas. At these Divisional Maintenance Areas commodities were broken down into the kinds and quantities required by units and were carried forward, generally by motor transport but in some places by animal transport, to points chosen by brigades. The final stage to the troops in the line was accomplished

Digitized by Google

by Jeeps-and-trailers, mules, and porters, any or all of them as might be dictated by the nature of the ground and of the fighting, and as might be available.

Although the administrative side of Allied Armies in Italy was working very satisfactorily by the Spring of 1944 the supply of 25-pdr and medium artillery ammunition, and of reinforcements, in particular for the infantry, continued to cause anxiety among the higher British commanders and staff officers.

The two main causes of trouble over artillery ammunition were not within the control of British commanders and staffs in the Mediterranean Theatre.[41] First of all the planned production of ammunition for British field and medium artillery was insufficient to meet the demands of all theatres of war in which British forces were engaged, or would be engaged; and secondly the nature of the fighting in Italy caused unexpectedly high consumption of gun ammunition. About this Alexander wrote to Wilson on 21st March 1944:

> 'The fighting in the Western Desert, for example, is so entirely different from that in which we are engaged here that the experience derived from it cannot be applied, without considerable correction, to this campaign. After the front had been broken at the Battle of Alamein there succeeded a long period of pursuit. At no time during this pursuit did the enemy make a determined stand until he reached the Mareth position. Ammunition expenditure was therefore heavy at Alamein but very low in the succeeding months.
>
> These are not at all the conditions which I expect to encounter during an advance in Italy. Here the country is close and admirably adapted to defence. The enemy shows at present every disposition to oppose our advance and to inflict the maximum delay possible upon us. The campaign to drive him North is likely to start with a battle on the scale of Alamein: two such battles may be necessary before Rome falls. After that the enemy may withdraw to the Apennine position, but he will do so gradually, leaving determined rearguards to dispute every mile. At the end of the pursuit we shall reach a strong defensive line, which we cannot hope to force without a further heavy battle.
>
> In all this fighting I am convinced that the concentrated use of field and medium artillery will be the key-note to success . . .
>
> This brings me to my next point, which is that we cannot afford heavy casualties. As you are well aware, the reinforcements situation is such that heavy casualties cannot be replaced. By using artillery massed and with a high rate of fire we can avoid casualties to a very considerable extent.'

Digitized by Google

On 21st March Alexander had to order his commanders to reduce expenditure to 15 rounds of 25-pdr ammunition and 10 rounds of medium ammunition per gun per day, except to repel attack or to support operations which he ordered or approved. These orders achieved some day to day savings during a fairly quiet period of the campaign but the problem set by the projected Spring offensive was formidable. 8th Army calculated its expenditure for April, at the restricted scale, as 302,400 rounds of 25-pdr ammunition and 72,000 rounds of medium. For the forthcoming offensive the requirement during the period of two months from D Day was estimated as 2,664,000 rounds of 25-pdr ammunition and 474,288 rounds of medium. Of this quantity 872,640 rounds of 25-pdr ammunition, and 145,104 rounds of medium were required during April for dumping in preparation for the offensive.* Wilson fully understood the problem but apart from stating it urgently to the War Office, could do no more than promise to give Alexander all the ammunition that might become available except for a very small reserve. He also declared that he was willing to accept whatever risks might arise during the second half of 1944 from ungrudging artillery support during the first half. In the event artillery ammunition was not stinted during the Spring offensive, and only the higher commanders and staff officers knew that ammunition was so scarce.

The main cause of the shortage of reinforcements also was not within the control of the commanders in the Mediterranean.[44] The supply of British manpower had reached its limit, making it increasingly difficult to meet the demands of the Services and of such vital industries as munitions, coal, and agriculture.† Casualties in the Italian campaign were turning out to be much heavier than had been expected. Estimates of casualties can be based only on a careful study of the nature and statistics of earlier campaigns and on

---

* The following rough figures of expenditure of ammunition are interesting:[42]

Formation	*Battle*	*25-pdr*	*Medium*	*Av. Expenditure of 25-pdr ammunition in r.p.g. per day*
8th Army	Alamein 23 Oct to 4 Nov 1942	1,027,000	200,000	102
,,	Mareth 16–26 March 1943	347,000	42,000	61
,,	Akarit	695,000	12,000	202
,,	River Sangro 20–30 November 1943	165,000	31,000	204 (maximum)
5th Army (NZ Corps)	Cassino 15–25 March 1944	431,154	75,717	204

For the months October 1942 to May 1943 British armies in Africa expended about 10,000 tons per month.[43] In Italy during October, November, and December 1943 British artillery expended about 22,000 tons per month.

† H. M. D. Parker, *Manpower*. (H.M.S.O. 1957), p. 210–211.

Digitized by Google

informed guesses. But, as Alexander wrote concerning ammunition expenditure, 'Obviously past experience is of value, but unless it is interpreted in the light of changed conditions, it is liable to lead to very false deductions.' The best informed guesses can prove to be wrong. In March 1944 the War Office stated that some 13,250 infantry reinforcements were being sent out to the Mediterranean in current convoys, and that no more could be expected until September. Wilson and Alexander, therefore, set about doing what they could to improve the supply of reinforcements from within their own resources. We will be examining the measures which they took in Chapter VIII.

We must now describe shortly some of the detailed administrative arrangements for the Spring offensive.

5th Army was to be maintained by its existing axis which ran from Naples through Capua, Sparanise, and Sessa Aurunca (*see Inset Map* 2).[45] Railheads were allotted to it at Sparanise and Teano, besides those at Caserta and Carinola. 5th Army had unrestricted use of the roads within its own boundaries and a share in the use of Highway 6. 8th Army had two axes for maintenance: one for the Army less 2nd Polish Corps, the other for 2nd Polish Corps. 8th Army was maintained from base installations in the area of Naples and its railheads were at Mignano, Tora, Vairano, and Riardo (ambulance and personnel) and the Army could in addition draw up to 1,000 tons of maintenance daily from Ortona on the east coast. 2nd Polish Corps was maintained from base ports on the eastern side of the Heel, and its railhead was at Lucera, north-west of Foggia. 5th Corps, under direct command of H.Q. A.A.I., was maintained from the base ports of the Heel and its railheads were at S. Vito, Torino di Sangro, Fossacesia, and Casalbordino.* Headquarters No. 55 Area supervised the work of the railheads at Mignano, Tora and Vairano: Headquarters No. 86 area did likewise for Lucera. 8th Army's main road axis to the north-west was Highway 6 from its junction with Highway 7 north of Capua.

Most of the petrol required for 5th and 8th Armies was pumped forward through five American pipelines to Calvi Risorta, Mignano,

---

* Capacities of some railheads in tons per day:

Sparanise	1,500
Teano	700
Mignano	900
Tora	600
Vairano	2,000
Lucera	1,000

Digitized by Google

and Sessa Aurunca and sent forward from these places by tankers*[46]. Plans were also made to extend these pipelines with two 4-inch lines along Route 6 as far as Rome and one along Route 7 as far as Fondi. Pipes were to be lifted for re-use when no longer needed.

The following scales of various kinds of reserves were in force in 8th Army:

	For	*Supplies*	*Petrol*	*Ammunition*
Army Holdings				
Western L. of C.	Seven divisions (including two armoured)	10 days'	200 miles	10 days'
Eastern L. of C.	Two divisions	4 ,,	100 ,,	—
Corps Holdings				
Western L. of C.	—	1 ,,	100 ,,	2 days'
Eastern L. of C.	—	3 ,,	100 ,,	5 ,,
Divisional Holdings	—	2 ,,	100 ,,	2 ,,

13th Corps established a F.M.C. (No. 115) near Presenzano and 2nd Polish Corps one near Isernia; the two Area H.Q.s each maintained a F.M.C. for Army troops and miscellaneous units. As Third Line transport four General Transport Companies were given to 13th Corps and three to the Polish Corps.

The administrative commitment was very great, and some figures for 8th Army given in the footnote will convey an idea of its size.†[47]

Besides preparing for the impending offensive at Cassino, in the Liri valley, and beyond the lower Garigliano and at Anzio, thought was being given to the administrative support of an advance northwards from Rome.[48] The railway line Mignano–Rome was intended to be the first to be restored to working order, and next the line Minturno–Campoleone–Rome.‡ The Peninsula Base Section was given the task of working and developing all west-coast ports from

---

* Pipelines:

Naples to Calvi Risorta	Three 4-inch
Calvi Risorta to Mignano	One 6-inch and one 4-inch
Calvi Risorta to Sessa Aurunca	One 4-inch.

† (a) Approximate strength of 8th Army on 7th May: 289,485

(b) Artillery of 8th Army on 12th May: close on 2,000 guns, anti-tank and anti-aircraft not included.

(c) The following amounts of ammunition were dumped for the beginning of the offensive:

13th Corps	*r.p.g.*
Heavy	200
Medium	350
25-pdr	600
2nd Polish Corps	
Medium	700
25-pdr	1,090

‡ In the event work on the lines began the moment the enemy had been driven back a little way. On a stretch of line near Cassino town the rails had been lifted and the railway bed had been turned into a road which was used by 8th Army. Nevertheless the line was opened for use on 5th July. On the stretch of line Minturno-Campoleone the repair of tunnels was very difficult and the line was not open for use until 25th July The first line to be restored to working order was Anzio-Campoleone-Rome on 29th June

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Map 3

Digitized by Google

Naples to Leghorn (exclusive). 5th Army was to be maintained from these ports or from existing railheads south of Rome. 8th Army was to be maintained from railheads on the line Mignano–Rome, and could not count on supplies from any west-coast port north of Naples, although it could draw on any British stocks which remained in the depots at Anzio. A.A.I. was to plan an advanced base at Rome, Peninsula Base Section one at Civitavecchia, and A.A.I. and 5th Corps one at Ancona. A.A.I.'s stocks were to be built up in the area Mignano–Vairano by rail from the base ports of the Heel.

(iii)

While the Allied Armies were preparing for the offensive the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces were continually engaged in operations, of which two thirds were in preparation for that offensive, and one third against targets outside Italy in general support of the whole war against Germany.[49] The period 1st April 1944 to dawn on 12th May is suitable for our review of air operations at this point. During this period the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces flew 60,345 sorties, excluding operations against shipping and attacks on ports (see Chapter VII). This was the equivalent of 1,472 sorties during every 24 hours, which was 20 per cent higher than the daily rate during March. A feature of this period was the number of sorties flown by the heavy day bombers of the United States Fifteenth Air Force (the American component of Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force) against targets in the Balkans. The general object was to interfere with supplies of oil and other commodities to Germany, and to help the Russians in their offensives in south-east Europe. By carrying the air war into eastern Europe as well as keeping up attacks on ports and shipping in the Adriatic and the Aegean the Allies were threatening the supplies of oil which were vital for Germany's war economy as well as for the forces of *OB Südost* and Army Group South Ukraine. Rumania was a case in point where the heavy day bombers flew 2,933 sorties against railway marshalling-yards and 282 sorties against aircraft factories and airfields. A different example was a sustained attack on the enemy's aircraft industry in Austria. The heavy day bombers flew 1,213 sorties against aircraft factories, 257 sorties against ball-bearing plants, and 303 sorties against airfields.*

---

* Table I, at the end of this chapter, shows in detail the sorties flown by the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces from 1st April 1944 to dawn on 12th May, excluding operations against shipping and attacks on ports.

NOTE. For convenience, in all tables of sorties throughout this volume the sorties expended on extraneous targets such as factories, radar sites, etc. in Italy and elsewhere and the sorties expended on direct support of the armies have been included under L. of C. and other targets.

Digitized by Google

During the period which we are considering Mediterranean Allied Air Forces and Royal Air Force Middle East lost about 405 aircraft in operations.[50] The German Air Force lost some 100 aircraft, including those destroyed on the ground by Allied action, and a further 84 which failed to return from operations for reasons unknown. There was a sharp contrast between the operations of the Allied and German air forces.[51] The Allied air forces were continually on the offensive, flying long distances over territory occupied by the enemy and covered by his air defences. On the other hand the offensive capability of the German air forces in the Mediterranean Theatre was steadily declining. By day over Italy the Allied airmen sometimes encountered enemy air formations composed of FW 190 fighter-bombers escorted by Me 109 fighters. At night the German long-range bombers became increasingly adept at evading Allied radar screens and could, on occasion, make damaging raids. But in general the Allied air force had won, and held, supremacy in the air.

See Map 3

The air operation which was most closely connected with the preparations for Alexander's offensive was named 'Strangle'. Its object was to destroy German rail, road, and sea communications south of the line Pisa–Rimini in the hope of depriving the Germans of their power to supply their forces in central Italy, and thereby compelling these forces to withdraw. The operation began on 19th March 1944 and was planned to end on 11th May just before the Allied armies began their offensive. We have described in our fifth volume (Chapters XIX and XXI) the theory which lay behind this operation and its progress up to 1st April. It may nevertheless be helpful to recapitulate.

Although German road and sea communications were attacked, it was against the railways that the Allied air forces chiefly exerted themselves. The Germans used three main railway routes, all electrified and double-tracked, to supply their forces which lay south of the line Pisa–Rimini. These were – the places named in order north to south –

Western	*Central*	*Eastern*
Pisa	Florence	Rimini
Leghorn	Arezzo	Ancona
Rome	Chiusi	
	Orvieto	
	Rome	

There were also two important lateral routes and a number of routes alternative to sections of the main routes which could provide

Digitized by Google

the Germans with diversions around damaged sections of the main routes. These are shown on *Map* 3.

The whole of the railway system in central Italy was, in theory, very vulnerable to air attack. The nature of the country through which the lines ran made it necessary to build numerous bridges, viaducts, tunnels, and embankments. These were just as attractive as marshalling-yards, repair shops, and rolling stock, but at this time were much harder to hit than larger area-targets such as marshalling-yards: and yet, like marshalling-yards, they could be repaired fairly quickly, with the exception of some types of bridge. It was natural therefore that Allied air commanders and staffs argued keenly, indeed at times hotly, about which type of target should be given priority in order to bring the railway system to a standstill.

The argument began with a report, dated 28th December 1943, which Professor S. Zuckerman had been asked to make on the effects of strategic bombing in the Mediterranean Theatre.[52] His analysis of operations showed so far as railways were concerned, that attacks upon rolling stock and repair facilities had achieved the most damaging effects in Sicily and Italy up to the middle of October 1943, when his investigation ended. Professor Zuckerman therefore advised that in air attack upon railways effort should be concentrated upon those marshalling-yards which held important repair facilities, and handled large quantities of rolling stock. There were not very many marshalling-yards of this description in Italy. Air Chief Marshal Tedder and the Air Ministry supported Zuckerman's thesis but others misinterpreted his advice to mean air attack on marshalling-yards in general rather than on marshalling-yards of the special kind which he described. His proposals even acquired a misleading title, 'The Marshalling-Yards Plan'. An opposing school of thought sprang up which found advocates at the Headquarters of Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, and of the United States Twelfth Air Force of which the greater part formed the American component of Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force. The members of this school believed that results could be achieved most quickly by attacking sections of track, bridges, viaducts, power stations and other electrical installations within a specified belt of territory stretching across Italy from coast to coast. This policy was known as 'Interdiction', and was largely based on the premise that the Germans needed only 5 per cent of the Italian railway system's capacity to supply the needs of their forces. This small amount of traffic did not depend on large marshalling-yards and facilities for repair, nor on great quantities of rolling stock. Therefore 'Interdiction' was the better way to bring the small amount of traffic to a standstill. Zuckerman's opinion was that 'Interdiction' might in the

Digitized by Google

short run achieve results more quickly than attack on his chosen type of marshalling-yard, but that it would cost far more air effort, and would be worthwhile only near the battle area. On 11th February Air Marshal Slessor, Deputy Air C.-in-C. of M.A.A.F., took a first step towards reconciling apparently contradictory points of view by ordering an examination of bombing policy in general and an investigation of 'Interdiction'.

As a result of his investigations Slessor realised that there were some circumstances in which marshalling-yards were suitable targets and others in which other railway targets were preferable.[53] The obvious course was to exploit the flexibility of air power to attack the right targets at the right time.

On 18th February Lieutenant-General Ira C. Eaker, Commander of M.A.A.F., issued a directive covering bombing policy in general. This directive influenced the bombing directives issued by Major-General John K. Cannon, Commander of Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force, and in particular Directive No. 2, dated 19th March, which governed the 'Strangle' operation. This directive classed marshalling-yards and repair facilities as targets of the first importance, and bridges, viaducts, tunnels, and some stretches of track as targets of the second importance. The operations of Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force were not an integral part of 'Strangle' but, in accordance with Eaker's directive, the heavy day and night bombers and the Wellingtons, whenever free from their primary tasks in the Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany, were to attack important marshalling-yards in northern Italy which lay beyond the range of M.A.T.A.F.'s aircraft.

'Strangle' was for the most part an operation by M.A.T.A.F.* Its force of medium bombers was its most powerful weapon in terms of bomb-load. In theory its principal task was to attack marshalling-yards and repair facilities and other targets which would disrupt traffic; but in practice the medium bombers concentrated most of their effort against bridges because improved techniques and growing experience greatly increased the accuracy of their attacks on pin-point targets.† The tasks of M.A.T.A.F.'s fighter-bombers, which operated low down and in almost any kind of weather, were to

---

* On 19th March M.A.T.A.F. had available to meet all its commitments: 25 squadrons of medium bombers, 8 of light day bombers, 22 of fighter-bombers, and 2 of light night bombers. During 'Strangle' M.A.T.A.F. received one more squadron of medium bombers, and three more squadrons of fighter-bombers, while two of its eight squadrons of light day bombers were transferred to the role of light night bombers. An eruption of Vesuvius on 20th March damaged by falling ash many of the Mitchells of the U.S. 340th Medium Bombardment Group which was stationed at Pompei, but the Group was again engaged in operations before the end of the month.

† In earlier operations the destruction of a bridge had cost about 200 tons of bombs. By the middle of May the quantity of bombs had been reduced to about 62 tons.[54]

Digitized by Google

attack small marshalling-yards, moving trains, stretches of track in open country, and motor transport. Whenever the weather grounded the medium bombers, which needed more height to bomb satisfactorily, the fighter-bombers were able to continue the destruction on the railways and interference with repairs.[55] These aircraft flew 9,263 sorties in 'Strangle', showing how large was their part in the operation in which M.A.T.A.F. flew a total of 15,329 bombing sorties. Targets were chosen at least 100 miles from the area of the main land battle, so as to stop rail traffic far enough away to overstrain German motor transport by increasing the distance to be run to the front. In the event, almost all movement by motor transport in daylight was also stopped.

The geographical areas allotted to the medium day bombers of M.A.T.A.F. (U.S. 42nd and 57th Medium Bombardment Wings) lay south of, but including, the line Pisa–Florence–Pontassieve, and west of, but including, the line Pontassieve–Arezzo–Orvieto–Orte. The fighter-bombers of U.S. XII Air Support Command were given the following railway routes:*

Western	*Central*
Montalto di Castro	(i) Viterbo
Rome	Rome
	(ii) Orvieto
	Orte
	(iii) Terni
	Orte
	Rome

The fighter-bombers and light bombers of the Desert Air Force were given the routes:

Central	*Eastern*
(i) Perugia	(i) Ancona
Terni	Pescara
(ii) Fabriano	(ii) Pescara
Foligno	Sulmona
Terni	Terni

U.S. XII Air Support Command's 57th Fighter Group, equipped with fighter-bombers and based in Corsica, was allotted three zones in a separate directive dated 26th March:

(a) Spezia south to Montalto di Castro, including the island of Elba and the sea within a radius of five miles from the island.

(b) South of, but including, the line Pisa–Florence–Pontassieve, and west of, but including the line Arezzo–Chiusi.

---

* U.S. XII Air Support Command and the Desert Air Force were part of M.A.T.A.F.

Digitized by Google

(c) A zone of exploitation north of the line Pisa–Florence–Pontassieve whenever aircraft were not required for tasks in (a) and (b).

The light bombers of U.S. XII Air Support Command, which flew only by day, were not included in Cannon's directive dated 19th March. They were employed in supporting 5th and 8th Armies mainly by attacking dumps within the area of the land battle. The light bombers of the Desert Air Force had similar tasks on the eastern side of the battle area but were to take part in 'Strangle' by day and night whenever possible. When the results of 'Strangle' were examined the absence of an adequate harassing force of night bombers was noted and a requirement was discussed for a special aircraft which would have increased armament, bombload and rate of climb for operations over mountainous country. The difficulty of finding small targets at night except when there was a bright moon seems to have been underrated, especially in the mountainous and broken terrain of central Italy. Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force played a small part, represented by 439 fighter-bomber sorties in 'Strangle'. Its units based in Corsica and Sardinia attacked rail and road targets in the western coastal strip of Italy, and No. 242 Group R.A.F. did likewise on the Adriatic side.

The results of the 'Strangle' operation between 19th and 31st March have been described in our fifth volume (Chapter XXI). To recapitulate shortly, 1,136 tons of bombs were dropped on marshalling-yards within the geographical area of the operation.* 1,692 tons of bombs were dropped upon targets of 'Interdiction' type such as bridges. 200 tons of bombs were dropped on roads and motor transport and the fighters flew many sorties with the object of strafing vehicles. Operations up to 31st March did not bring the enemy's rail and road L. of C. to a standstill but very seriously interfered with traffic. On 4th April Kesselring stated that *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* were receiving 1,357 tons of supplies and stores daily instead of the 2,261 which were their minimum daily requirement.

The course of 'Strangle' from 1st April to the night 11th/12th May provides a catalogue of destruction and damage which, although very important would be monotonous to present in detail. It is perhaps better to give some typical examples, grouping them under the railway routes which have been described earlier, and glancing also at some targets in northern Italy which were beyond the range

* From the point of view of the air forces the northern boundary of the area of the land battle was a line (*shown on Map* 3) running from Fiumicino on the west coast south-west of Rome–Palestrina–Sgurgola–Arpino–Pescasseroli–Popoli—Citta S. Angelo on the east coast north of Pescara. We have excluded the area of the land battle because it was a standing task of the air forces to attack German movement within it, and because to prevent supplies reaching it was 'Strangle's' object.

Digitized by Google

of M.A.T.A.F. and were therefore tackled by the Strategic Air Force.[56]

On the Western route on 2nd April Airacobras of Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force damaged a bridge over the River Ombrone, south of Grosseto, which remained closed for a long time. On 6th April U.S. Kittyhawk fighter-bombers destroyed three lines of track at Maccarese station, west of Rome, and closed the line to through traffic. On the 20th further attacks did still more damage; this line was closed for seventeen days in all. On 11th April Mitchells (medium bombers) destroyed a bridge over the River Fiora at Montalto di Castro, and Coastal Airacobras destroyed the tracks north of this place. Because all the damage occurred south of Montepescali, the alternative route Empoli–Asciano–Montepescali could not help in reducing the delay to traffic.

The lateral route between Florence and Empoli was obstructed when Marauders (medium bombers) of M.A.T.A.F. badly damaged a bridge over the Arno near Montelupo. It was however the central routes which attracted the largest number of attacks, as might be expected because of their importance. On 1st April Mitchells of M.A.T.A.F. and Mustang fighter-bombers of U.S. XII Air Support Command destroyed four bridges between Chiusi and Rome. On 2nd April Mitchells closed the station and the bridge at Ficulle between Chiusi and Orvieto, and U.S. Kittyhawk fighter-bombers closed the track at Poggio Mirteto and at Fara in Sabina between Orte and Rome. On 2nd April also Kittyhawk fighter-bombers of the Desert Air Force damaged a bridge over the River Tiber at Todi, between Perugia and Terni. This bridge was attacked on later occasions and was kept closed. On 4th April Desert Air Force Kittyhawks damaged a bridge at Marciano, south of Arezzo, and three weeks later this bridge had not been repaired.

On 5th April *AOK 14* recorded that stores could be moved south of Florence only by road. The attacks on the central rail routes continued relentlessly. On 6th April Marauders destroyed a bridge at Chiani (three miles west of Arezzo) and the German engineers were unable to say how long rebuilding would take. A bridge over the Tiber at Bassano (three miles north of Orte) was destroyed and was not rebuilt until 26th April. On 7th April Marauders damaged a bridge at Pontassieve, and destroyed one at Incisa, south of Florence, with the result that rail traffic was interrupted for a week. Between 10th and 14th April four attacks closed the station at Fara in Sabina where the line had already been closed by attacks on 2nd April. On 10th April Marauders damaged still more the already damaged Bucine viaduct, and on this day the Germans reported that southbound trains could not pass Pontassieve. On 11th April an important station near Siena was wrecked; its buildings, sidings, and

Digitized by Google

sources of electrical power were destroyed. By 24th April the only clear line on the central route was that between Cortona and Foligno on the alternative to the section Cortona–Orte and, for example, supplies bound south of Florence by rail had to be off-loaded at a gap, carried across, and reloaded beyond it, three times before Ficulle was reached.

On the eastern route Marauders destroyed a bridge near Fano, and damaged another near Falconara on 2nd April. On 8th April Baltimore light bombers and Kittyhawk fighter-bombers of the Desert Air Force destroyed the bridge over the River Vomano, south of Roseto, and damaged another, further to the north, at Cupra Marittima. On 11th April the bridge at Falconara, which had been under repair since the 2nd, was again damaged by the Desert Air Force's Kittyhawks. In short, the Eastern route became impassable by the end of April, and supplies for German troops on the eastern side of Italy had to be carried from Florence by road.

The damage to the Italian railways inflicted by Allied air attack increased daily and the German repair organization tried to keep pace with it by ceaseless toil. For example, on the Central route by the end of April 69 cases of damage awaited repair, and 155 others were added during the first week in May. The Germans managed to repair 129 cases of damage but the arrears of repairs increased: on 8th May 95 jobs remained to be done, a number which rose to 106 by 16th May. It was a see-saw battle between damage and repair. For example, a short distance east of Florence a section of the line Florence–Arezzo had been restored to working order by 10th May, as had sections of the Central route between S. Giovanni Valdarno and Indicatore (4 miles west of Arezzo), and between Arezzo and Ficulle. And then on 12th May air attack stopped all movement south of Castigliane del Lago (Lake Trasimeno) on the line Arezzo–Chiusi.

The story of this operation so far has been, with two exceptions, that of the part played by the Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force. The Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force also took part, and between 19th March and the night 11th/12th May its heavy and medium bombers flew 2,815 sorties, of which 2,498 sorties were directed against targets north of the line Pisa–Rimini.[57] For example, Royal Air Force Liberators and Wellingtons attacked the marshalling-yard at Vicenza on the night 2nd/3rd April. On 7th April Liberators and Fortresses dropped 397 tons of bombs on the marshalling-yard at Treviso, 219 tons at Mestre (Venice), 59 tons at Ferrara, and 214 tons at Bologna. At Treviso the station buildings were destroyed and the tracks widely damaged; at Mestre damage to the station and to rolling stock halted through traffic; near Bologna all tracks were blocked for a fortnight.

Digitized by Google

The 'Strangle' operation ended on the night 11th/12th May, although the Allied air forces continued to attack the German L. of C.[58] Table II, at the end of this chapter, gives in detail the approximate total of the sorties flown during the whole operation from 19th March to 12th May by all types of bomber, the quantities of bombs which were dropped, and the types of target which were attacked. All in all, and including attacks on ports and shipping which will be described in a later chapter, some 21,000 bomber sorties were flown and some 22,500 tons of bombs were dropped. It is impossible to identify and count the strafing sorties flown by aircraft, especially by bombers and fighter-bombers, or the sorties flown by fighters when escorting bombers.

Information concerning the results of this great air operation is far from complete, but what information can be gathered may be summarized, in terms of interruption of railway traffic, (illustrated on *Map* 3 *Inset* 1) as follows:

Route	Section	Alternative Route	Result
Western	Pisa–Montepescali	—	Completely blocked from 22nd March
		Empoli–Montepescali	Blocked during April and May
		Asciano–Montepescali	
Central	Florence–Chiusi	—	Blocked from 22nd March except for 5 days at most.
	Chiusi–Rome	—	Blocked from 22nd March.
		Empoli–Siena	Blocked from 25th March.
		Siena–Chiusi	Blocked between 13th and 19th April and again from 22nd April.
		Terontola–Perugia	Blocked from 28th April.
		Perugia–Foligno	Blocked between 1st and 27th April and between 29th April and 6th May.
		Foligno–Orte	Blocked from 22nd March.
Eastern	Rimini–Ancona	—	Blocked almost continuously from 21st March.
Connections with ports	Civitavecchia–Rome–Orte	—	Blocked from 19th April.
	Ancona–Falconara–Foligno	—	Blocked between 13th and 25th April and again continuously from 27th April.

Digitized by Google

The 'Strangle' operation can be said to have failed in its very ambitious object of destroying the German rail, road, and sea communications south of the line Pisa–Rimini because it did not force a German withdrawal. Success, although possible in theory, was impossible in practice even with the large air resources available. Nevertheless a great deal was done towards the enemy's discomfiture. Through rail traffic in central Italy was almost paralysed and elsewhere enormous damage was done to railways. The Germans were compelled to devise an elaborate organization to repair this damage and to expend upon the task large amounts of military and civilian labour and of materials of one sort and another. They were forced moreover to throw a heavy load upon motor transport, and to expose their vehicles to both constant air attack and excessive wear and tear. They were also forced to consume quantities of fuel that they could ill afford. The full effect of the damage to road and rail transport only became apparent during the German retreat from the Gustav Line in May and June and thereafter.

On 11th April Kesselring created the post of 'General with special responsibility for the maintenance of rail communication in Italy', and appointed to it an air force officer, Wenninger.[59] Railway repair now became a precise military operation. When damage occurred, reconnaissance parties of experts in railway work immediately and accurately assessed the damage. Railway Construction Battalions then worked out the materials, equipment, and manpower which were required for each job and the time required. From this data the staff prepared co-ordinated and methodical plans for repair. German engineer troops provided the skilled workmen, and local German units, the Todt Organization, and press-ganged Italians provided the labour.*

Wenninger had power to direct men and materials to points where they were most needed, and to obtain the help of troops, especially in the rear areas, for many tasks including preserving law and order in towns and cities which had been heavily bombed.

Besides their excellent organization for the repair of the railways, and their use of motor transport, the Germans showed great ingenuity in using roundabout rail routes to circumvent blockages, and great energy in moving goods from train to train across gaps by making diversions for road vehicles and even by manhandling. They also used small craft of all kinds to move goods by sea between

* The Todt Organization came into being before the war when Hitler entrusted Fritz Todt with building Germany's *Autobahnen*. Todt was killed in an air accident in 1942 and was succeeded by Speer, but the organization kept Todt's name. Its purpose was to perform all kinds of constructional work of importance to the outcome of the war. The organization was semi-military; there was a cadre of German officers, and the labourers were German or foreign volunteers, conscripts, and prisoners of war.

Digitized by Google

small harbours or even between beaches.*

If we return to the Allies we can see some reasons for their failure to achieve decisive success. Excluding attacks on ports and shipping, we find that between 19th March and the night 11th/12th May a total of about 18,850 tons of bombs was dropped on the 'Strangle' targets. Of this quantity some 7,380 tons were dropped upon a large number of marshalling-yards, and of this 7,380 tons about 5,020 tons were dropped north of the Pisa–Rimini line, outside the geographical area of 'Strangle', and no more than 2,355 tons were dropped within it. The marshalling-yards which were hit were of several types and not solely of 'Zuckerman' type, and this variety explains the large number because if the attacks had been confined to 'Zuckerman' type only, the number of yards would have been less. It also happened that most of the marshalling-yards were situated north of the Pisa–Rimini line where the shape of Italy broadens from east to west. This large area was dotted with marshalling-yards and railway junctions placed upon a maze of major and minor railway routes. Because the Germans required for military purposes only a small part of the total capacity of the Italian railways they were able to move most of their supplies in 'through' trains on a few main routes without much shunting. When marshalling-yards or railway junctions were temporarily blocked alternative routes could usually be found. Locomotives and rolling stock were plentiful as were workshops for repairs. The 5,020 tons or so bombs dropped north of the Pisa–Rimini line were spread thinly on the many marshalling-yard targets and had very small and very temporary effects upon what one might call the 'trickle' of German railway traffic; indeed it would not be an exaggeration to say that they were wasted.[61] It is surprising that the strategic air effort which accounts for virtually all that was expended by M.A.A.F. north of the Pisa–Rimini line was instead not concentrated on the marshalling-yards and railway junctions at Leghorn, Pisa, Empoli, Florence, Faenza and Rimini which were situated almost on the Pisa–Rimini line and within the narrower confines of the Italian peninsula. If M.A.S.A.F. and M.A.T.A.F. had blocked these six points and constantly interfered with their repair, the Germans would have been forced to ferry their supplies by road to points on the railways south of them. This double handling would have greatly delayed German railway traffic even before the effects of M.A.T.A.F.'s activities

---

* Some figures for coastal traffic are in tons:[60]

	March	*April*
East coast	12,000	14,528
West coast	39,000	32,587
To and from Dalmatian coast	22,700	36,156

These tonnages are of goods moved by sea to harbours or beaches for onward transport by road and rail. They are not the quantities which reached the front.

Digitized by Google

in central Italy had begun to take effect. From the evidence available it is only possible to conclude that the wasted effort was caused by weaknesses in communication within and between the various Air headquarters concerned, and a failure to think through and maintain a logical target policy at all levels.

South of the Pisa–Rimini line the German L. of C. was confined within the narrow space of central Italy, and here 10,855 tons of bombs were dropped mainly by M.A.T.A.F., on targets of 'Interdiction' type. This weight of bombs seriously interrupted the enemy's L. of C. but he was not forced to withdraw northwards because the German logistic staffs were brilliant improvisers. Some of the measures they used were: supply by coastal shipping; accumulation of reserve stocks in the forward area during the winter, when bad weather reduced Allied air attacks; frugality and living off the country as much as possible; and husbanding ammunition during 'quiet' spells in operations. They could not, however, overcome the high consumption of motor fuel and the steady attrition of motor transport by air attack and wear and tear. When the Allies began their Spring offensive the wounds which 'Strangle' had inflicted became apparent. They lacked the necessary transport to move the increased quantities of ammunition which was being consumed at battle rate, to bring forward reinforcements, and for tactical movement of troops.

With hindsight, we can now suggest that as the withdrawal of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* by reason of air operations alone would have been anathema to Hitler, 'Strangle' could not of itself have forced these Armies northwards. Had the Allies possessed many more fighter-bombers with which to wreck road transport, and had it been possible to advance July's destruction of the Po bridges, this chain of havoc could have choked the life out of the Germans in central Italy. But this is speculation, and we can say with certainty that although 'Strangle' was robbed of success by the layout of the Italian railway system, and by the fact that *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* did not need its full capacity, the results of the operation were nonetheless very valuable and did not disprove Zuckerman's theory.

See Map 13 and 20

The Allied air forces did not make many attacks on German airfields in Italy during the period which we are surveying. Bombers of all types dropped no more than about 320 tons of bombs on these targets and some strafing attacks were made upon them.[62] Indeed the enemy's airfields needed little attention although they were kept under constant surveillance. As we have noticed at the beginning of this section, the German Air Force in Italy was being steadily

Digitized by Google

withdrawn although the commanders of German land forces complained continually and vigorously of the absence of air support.*

During the period of our review, 1st April until dawn 12th May, the heavy day bombers of the United States Fifteenth Air Force directed a large effort against targets in the Balkans and central Europe. The objects of the attacks were to damage communications and the supply of oil and minerals to Germany, to damage the industries which helped to maintain the German air force, and to help the Russians who were on the offensive from the Crimea to the Carpathians. The total sorties flown by day were:

against	Rumania	3,218
,,	Hungary	1,151
,,	Austria	1,783
,,	Yugoslavia	1,175
,,	Bulgaria	252

An idea of the distribution of these sorties is given in the footnote.†

Rumania and Hungary were the countries nearest to Russian fronts west of the River Dnieper and facing the Carpathians. Rumania was full of German troops who had been driven westwards by the Russians, and a Rumanian field army was deployed between Jassy and the Carpathians[63] These forces had to be maintained by traffic moving generally eastward while the vital supplies of oil from the fields at Ploesti had to be moved westward. The Rumanian railways were being overloaded and were suffering from shortages of rolling stock, rails, points, and sleepers. It is against this background that air attacks on Rumania should be viewed, and some examples follow. On 4th April 220 Liberators and 93 Fortresses dropped 771 tons of bombs on marshalling-yards and other railway installations at Bucharest. On 5th April 136 Liberators and 95 Fortresses dropped 490 tons of bombs on marshalling-yards, shunting yards, and oil refineries at Ploesti, and on 24th April 293 Liberators and Fortresses dropped 712 tons of bombs on the same targets. The tonnage of bombs dropped in these attacks was much greater than in the attack made in August 1943 by 177 Liberators carrying a bombload of 280 tons from bases in North Africa.[64] The damage done to the oil refineries in April was rather less than in the previous

---

* On 6th April General der Flieger Ritter von Pohl's appointment, *Nahkampfführer Luftflotte* 2, was renamed *Kommandierender General der Deutschen Luftwaffe in Mittelitalien* (Commanding General of the German Air Force in Central Italy). The new title represented a further step in the reduction in status of the German air command in Italy.

†

	L. of C. Targets	*Aircraft industry and airfields*	*Miscellaneous*
Rumania	2,933	282	3
Hungary	539	612	—
Austria	—	1,773	10
Yugoslavia	746	393	36
Bulgaria	252	—	—

Digitized by Google

August, but the damage done simultaneously to the railways resulted in only 137,000 tons of oil being moved westwards in April out of 270,000 tons ready for shipment. This state of affairs was unwelcome to the Germans, and another attack in May was described by Keitel as catastrophic.

In Hungary the people at large had accepted virtual occupation by the Germans.[65] The relations between the German and Hungarian military authorities were good and the country had become a useful training ground for newly raised German infantry and S.S. divisions. But here too Allied air power intruded. On 3rd April 268 Liberators dropped 616 tons of bombs on the marshalling-yards at Budapest and 111 Fortresses dropped 296 tons of bombs on an aircraft factory near the city. On 13th April 501 Liberators and Fortresses dropped 877 tons of bombs on various targets, including an aircraft factory and gas and electrical plants at Gyor, some 70 miles west of Budapest. Besides material damage, these attacks shook the morale of civilians and led them to think that they were threatened by the Western Allies as well as by the Red Army.

In Yugoslavia fighting between the German forces and those of Marshal Tito occurred over a wide area, and German efforts to keep a modest initiative were hindered by Allied air attacks which were widely spread and directed mainly against railway centres.[66] On 3rd April 38 Fortresses dropped 101 tons of bombs on the marshalling-yard at Brod, and on 13th 34 Fortresses dropped 85 tons of bombs. Much damage was done to the marshalling-yard, to rolling stock, and to the supply of electricity and water. On 5th April 69 Liberators and Fortresses dropped 160 tons of bombs on the marshalling-yard at Nis in eastern Yugoslavia and destroyed most of the repair shops. On 12th April it was the turn of north-western Yugoslavia and of the railway and the airfield at Zagreb: 99 Liberators demolished runways, hangars and aircraft; and blocked the railway track. On 17th April attacks switched eastward to Belgrade: 125 Fortresses dropped 333 tons of bombs, putting the main railway bridge over the River Sava out of action for about five weeks and damaging the marshalling-yard. On the same day 34 Liberators dropped 70 tons of bombs on the airfield at Zemun, close to Belgrade, and destroyed or damaged twelve aircraft as well as hangars and runways.

All the attacks summarized in the four paragraphs above were interesting examples of the strategic bombers' practice of taking advantage of good weather reported over distant targets.

While the German air force in Italy was dwindling, those of the Allies were being redeployed. The transfer of 8th Army to the western side of Italy meant that the Commanding General of

Digitized by Google

U.S. XII Air Support Command became responsible on 23rd March for providing and co-ordinating the air support for both 5th and 8th Armies, A.O.C. Desert Air Force retaining responsibility for 5th Corps' front. The Commanding General U.S. XII Air Support Command was therefore represented at H.Q. 8th Army by a small operational staff, as was A.O.C. Desert Air Force. The co-ordination of the two Army Air Support Controls was taken over by H.Q. A.A.I. On 6th April Air Vice-Marshal W. F. Dickson took over command of the Desert Air Force from Air Vice-Marshal Harry Broadhurst who returned to England to take part in 'Overlord'. Thus ended Broadhurst's distinguished service in the Mediterranean Theatre where he had been Senior Air Staff Officer at Air H.Q. Western Desert before taking command of the Desert Air Force on 1st February 1943. During the period of our review several Royal Air Force and Commonwealth squadrons joined the air forces in the western Mediterranean from Middle East. The transfers were not a reinforcement because several squadrons left the Theatre to reinforce the air forces in England. These moves as well as those of squadrons within Italy and between Italy and Corsica are summarized in the footnote.*

(iv)

See Maps 2 and 4

The German High Command waited and speculated during April.[67] The invasion of north-western Europe by the Allies was

---

* (a) *From Middle East to Western Mediterranean*

No. 237 (Rhodesian) Squadron R.A.F.		to Corsica
No. 238 Squadron R.A.F.		All single-engine fighter squadrons.
No. 451 Squadron R.A.A.F.		
No. 7 Squadron S.A.A.F.	Single-engine fighter	to Desert Air Force
No. 318 (Polish) Sqdn. R.A.F.	Tac R	
No. 17 Squadron S.A.A.F.	G.R. To Gibraltar, later to M.A.C.A.F.	

(b) *From M.A.A.F. to UK:*

No. 33 Squadron R.A.F.	All single-engine fighter squadrons.
„ 74 „ „	
„ 127 „ „	
„ 80 „ „	
„ 274 „ „	
„ 126 „ „	
„ 229 „ „	
„ 52 „ „	G.R.
„ 69 „ „	
„ 23 „ „	Mosquito Intruder

(c)* U.S. 57th Fighter Group — From Desert Air Force to Corsica.
No. 40 Squadron S.A.A.F. — From Desert Air Force to Western Italy.
No. 208 Squadron R.A.F. — „ „ „ „ „ „ „

(*The departure of U.S. 57th Fighter Group ended the Anglo-American composition of the Desert Air Force. This Fighter Group had taken part in the battle of Alamein, and had then fought alongside D.A.F. during the advance to Tunisia, in Sicily, and in Italy. U.S. 79th Fighter Group, which had joined D.A.F. in March 1943, had left it earlier than 57th.)

Digitized by Google

now thought to be certain but the place and date could not yet be accurately predicted. But even more important than the looming Allied invasion was the depressing course of the campaign in Russia. Beside these great matters, the state of affairs in Italy, where since the end of March a lull had set in except in the air, was much less important to the High Command. On 7th April Jodl (Chief of the Operations Branch at *OKW*) however looked at Italy in the context of the balance of German forces in Europe (excluding the Home Zone) which he examined in detail in order to refute allegations that the European Theatres were husbanding divisions which were qualified to serve on the Eastern Front. Of the nine divisions which could rate as theatre reserves three were in Italy but here Kesselring, with twenty divisions plus two in formation, faced about thirty-five Allied divisions which were mostly stronger in manpower and equipment.* As the Allies moreover had supremacy at sea and in the air, in addition to defending central Italy Kesselring must protect 750 miles of coast against possible landings. At Anzio disaster had been staved off only by committing the last reserves available in the Home Zone, and thus another successful landing could result in the destruction of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14*. Jodl then considered whether it would be advantageous if Kesselring withdrew northwards, but decided that his present line was shorter and easier to defend than a line in the Apennines or in the Alps. An Alpine line would require more divisions to defend it, and withdrawal to it would present the Allies with several air bases from which to attack the L. of C. or targets in southern Germany. There were political dangers also because Switzerland would be 'brought into the front line' and would be subjected to increasing pressure from the Allies. Jodl concluded that there could be no change in the strategic or tactical policies for Italy. As Hitler had indicated the lines on which Jodl was to make his survey, he probably found this conclusion to be acceptable.

For the moment then Italy found no place in *OKW's* directives except that on 26th April the Hermann Göring Panzer Division was named as one of eleven divisions which were to form a central reserve under *OKW's* direct command.[68] For Kesselring, this meant that the division could not be moved or sent into action without the sanction of the High Command, but he did not lose it. On 30th April Jodl refused a request from his staff to transfer this division to the West because he believed that a powerful mobile formation

* Jodl stated that of the 131 divisions which were stationed in Europe (excluding the Home Zone) in March 1944, 90 were unsuitable for service in Russia as they were still forming, or under-equipped, or contained too high a proportion of non-German personnel. With 19 of the remaining 41 divisions embattled, and a further 13 committed to defence of the coasts and islands, in all Europe only 9 divisions were available for theatre reserves. 210 divisions were in the East on 1st March.

Digitized by Google

was required in northern Italy to meet a possible Allied break out from Anzio or a landing north of Rome. As other views had other supporters it will be interesting to follow a little further the thoughts of the German High Command about the situation in Italy, and then to consider the views of the German commanders on the spot, which did not always coincide.

At High Command level, it was generally assumed in April that for the Allies the Mediterranean Theatre was now overshadowed by their plans to invade north-western France. Preparations for this invasion seemed complete, but the time and place of landing were uncertain. At the end of April military Intelligence favoured a cross-Channel crossing either side of the Straits of Dover, which might occur during the first fortnight of May. Naval Intelligence preferred June, on the grounds that training and assembly of assault shipping were incomplete and fuel stocks as yet insufficient. Decreeing that there must be no weakening of the Straits sector, on 26th April Hitler ordered *OB West* to reinforce Brittany and Normandy, and on the 29th announced that the invasion was to be expected at any moment.

By this time he had granted audience to Mussolini, who had asked to see him in March in the hopes of thereby gaining more control over the administration and economy of that part of Italy which was nominally under his government, and of getting Hitler to agree to an expansion of the Salò Republic's Army. The Duce and his team gained nothing from the meeting, which was held at Klessheim on 22nd and 23rd April, and little of military relevance emerged from the Führer's customary harangue beyond the statement that '. . . if nothing exceptional went wrong, it would be possible to hold the Italian front.'

In this he was encouraged by the belief of his Intelligence staffs that if the Allies staged landing operations in the Mediterranean Theatre these would be of a diversionary nature, designed to pin down the German forces there, or possibly to divert others from north-western France. In the latter context he agreed with Jodl on 12th April that a landing on France's Biscayan coast might be coupled with a smaller operation in the south, and in the former he surmised on the 13th that troops might be put ashore between Littoria and Minturno, on the right flank of 6th U.S. Corps' beachhead at Anzio. On 7th April German naval Intelligence estimated that the Allies' assault shipping in the Mediterranean was up to 75% of its 1943 peak, but sea traffic in these waters gave no clue to their intentions.

Nor were Allied purposes clarified by the reports on redeployment within Italy which reached *OKW*. By mid-April these seemed to point to the assembly near Naples of a force of four to six divisions,

Digitized by Google

and to a southwards extension of the zone under command of 8th Army, as far as Highway 6. Whether this meant that H.Q. 5th Army was preparing to leave the Garigliano front in order to take command of the 'Naples Group', and whether this Group would then undertake landings on the Italian coast, or join Allied forces in North Africa for an assault on southern France, were all posed on 12th April as questions which Hitler's military Intelligence could not yet answer. By the end of that month the last hypothesis had lost ground, but as the High Command was unable to say whether the 'Naples Group' would be employed for landings in Italy, or would strike up Highway 7 for a frontal assault on the German defences, uncertainty remained. We have seen that on 30th April Jodl held that the Allies might be planning to break out of their Anzio beachhead, or to land north of Rome, but on 2nd May his subordinate, General von Buttlar, reckoned that they were more likely to attempt to breach the German defences between Gaeta and Mt Cassino, and then exploit to Frosinone. von Buttlar did not forecast what Alexander would do thereafter, but appreciated that, as the purpose of any Allied undertaking in Italy would be to tie down German forces, its timing would be related to the beginning of 'Overlord', whenever that might be. The Allies might support an offensive in Italy by landings, but these were likely to be small and close behind the fighting front.

The equally varying views on their opponents' intentions which were expressed by the German commanders on the spot reflect the baffling nature of the information regarding Allied troop movements in Italy which was culled from radio intercepts, field identifications, prisoners of war and agents.*

These reports revealed little of substance, but by mid-April were pointing to a reinforcement of the Allies' western flank.[70] von Senger, the commander of *AOK 10's* 14th Panzer Corps, began early in the month to suspect that his right wing might be attacked, and this view was shared by the Army Commander, von Vietinghoff, after Kesselring's Intelligence staff reported on 10th April that 8th Army's zone of command might now extend to Highway 6. Agents had spotted staff cars of this Army in Naples, also vehicles of 6th Armoured Division which the Germans had believed to be in North Africa. On the 11th American artillery units were reported to be moving south from Cassino, and radio intercepts suggested that in this sector the newly-identified 4th Division and the New Zealand Division might be swopping places with French and Polish troops, also that 8th Indian Division was moving down from the Adriatic coast for relief of 4th Indian Division.

* Espionage was a fact. On 16th April two Italians, who had been convicted of espionage by an Allied Military Court and sentenced to death, were shot.[69]

Digitized by Google

From all this von Vietinghoff deduced on 12th April that the Allies were engaged on a programme of reliefs which made it unlikely that they were planning to attack Cassino in the near future. Instead he believed that they were preparing an offensive in order to unite their main force and 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio, which would probably be accompanied by outflanking landings from the sea. von Senger's further views were summarized in his Corps' War Diary for 13th April.[71] He reasoned that because the Allies had failed to break the defences of Cassino and to enter the Liri valley, their next attack would be made from their beachhead at Anzio. Their objects would be to remove their troops from that unhealthy area before hot weather began and to link up with 8th Army. An attack from Anzio could not however succeed unless *AOK 10* was pinned down by frontal attacks and perhaps by landings between Gaeta and Sperlonga. It was evident that the Allies were reinforcing their western flank and this suggested that they would try to roll up *AOK 10's* positions on the west coast. von Vietinghoff agreed with this prognosis at the time when it was made, and although Kesselring retained a strong central reserve for possible landings north of Rome the Field-Marshal sanctioned the reinforcement of 14th Panzer Corps at the expense of the Adriatic front, where an Allied attack was not expected.[72] The resultant troop movements, which are described in Chapter II, were set in train by 15th April and on the 17th von Senger went on leave.

He handed command of his Corps to General of Artillery Otto Hartmann, who was sixty years old and whom Field-Marshal von Kleist, in Russia in September 1943, had classed as unsuited for an operational command because of poor health and family troubles. Since February, 1944, Hartmann had held an administrative appointment on Kesselring's staff, but it was in his new role as Corps Commander that Kesselring visited him on 23rd April. On this date a prisoner of 5th Canadian Armoured Division was taken south of Mt Cifalco, and a Moroccan deserter declared that 5th and 8th Armies would attack on 25th April. These incidents awoke the suspicion that the Allies might be intending to attack the left flank of 14th Panzer Corps, as well as its right, and with the suspicion grew the feeling that Hartmann and his Chief of Staff, von Altenstadt, would then have too much on their hands.

Wentzell (*AOK 10's* Chief of Staff) communicated this feeling to Westphal (Chief of Staff to Kesselring) on 24th April, but on the 23rd the Field-Marshal dwelt on broader issues. He said that the Allies were unlikely to attack southern France because it was so distant. If they were to use their forces in North Africa for a landing, Leghorn was a likely target because a large force landed there would have the chance of cutting off the German armies in central Italy and of

Digitized by Google

thrusting towards the southern frontiers of the Reich. He no longer expected an attack from the Anzio beachhead, and thought that the Allies might attack the right flank of 14th Panzer Corps and simultaneously make a diversionary attack at, or north of, Cassino as well as landings between Gaeta and Terracina. The attacks would not have strategic effects unless reserves from North Africa were used. On 24th April Hartmann informed *AOK 10* that, although he was still primarily concerned for his southern wing, he must also be prepared to meet several simultaneous attacks.[73] In that contingency his own reserves would soon be used up and he would have to be reinforced from other fronts. With Westphal's approval, von Vietinghoff thereupon issued preliminary orders for a changed command structure which would, as explained in *AOK 10's* War Diary, serve to lighten the responsibilities of 14th Panzer Corps and to provide for a more efficient control of operations should the Allies attack in several places at once. To this end 51st Mountain Corps (Feuerstein) was instructed on 24th April to prepare to take under command the three divisions which were in the centre of *AOK 10's* front, namely 44th Infantry, 5th Mountain and 114th Jäger Divisions. On the Adriatic side 305th and 334th Infantry Divisions would form *Korpsgruppe Hauck*, and south of 51st Mountain Corps 14th Panzer Corps would retain command of 94th and 71st Infantry, 15th Panzer Grenadier and 1st Parachute Divisions.

This plan would have left Hartmann in command of the front from Terracina up to and inclusive of Cassino but it was soon amended for his northern wing. When visiting 14th Panzer Corps on 26th April von Vietinghoff confidently announced that the Allies' next offensive would have no larger aim than that of pinning down German troops in central Italy, and that its opening would depend on fine weather at the next new moon (22nd May). However, he wanted to get 5th Mountain Division settled under command of 51st Mountain Corps while there was still a lull in operations, and he felt that if the Allies combined a frontal assault with landings on 14th Panzer Corps' coastal flank Hartmann's command facilities might be overtaxed. For this reason it might be necessary for 51st Mountain Corps to extend its front southwards to include the River Liri, and also to take command of 1st Parachute Division.

Hartmann and von Altenstadt naturally objected. They were confident that the troops defending Cassino would stand as firm as in the past, and were moreover of the view that only if the Allies committed large reserves would this sector again be subjected to heavy pressure. But they believed that Cassino town, Mt Cassino and the adjacent sectors from Terelle down to the Liri formed an important 'tactical whole' which should continue to be defended by their Corps. Their objections did not prevail and the reorganisa-

Digitized by Google

tion went ahead, although von Vietinghoff did not issue the orders which ratified its final design until 7th May.

On 26th April he assured Hartmann that parts of 26th Panzer and 90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions would be sent into action if a serious situation developed in the coastal sector, but neither at Headquarters *AOK 10* nor at *AOK 14* was there a sense of urgency regarding forthcoming Allied operations. von Mackensen, commanding *AOK 14*, was told by his Intelligence staff on 26th April that there were no signs of preparations for an offensive within the Anzio beachhead, nor did landings seem imminent. However Kesselring was taking no chances, for on 24th April he ordered the bulk of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division to move to the Tiber estuary, while 29th Panzer Grenadier Division was to assemble north-west of Rome. In the light of the deception plan now being operated by the Allies, it is of interest that on 30th April Kesselring's Intelligence reported that agents had observed numerous Canadian troops and vehicles in Salerno, and had located Headquarters 1st Canadian Division at Nocera, north-west of Salerno. Few of the French formations were located, but 3rd Algerian Division was placed east of Salerno on 16th April, and on 2nd May this Division was stated to be carrying out landing exercises in the area.

As April was not a taxing month in the field, the Commanders and troops of *AOK 10* were in confident mood after their successful defence of the Garigliano and Cassino fronts, and those of *AOK 14* had settled to stalemate in the Anzio beachhead.[74] Reinforcements were of variable quality but they were arriving in satisfactory numbers, and equipment in satisfactory quantity. On 7th April von Vietinghoff declared that his divisions were among the best in the German army and that they had received more reinforcements than any others. There were of course some worries, particularly for the administrative staffs and units who were struggling to keep the L. of C. working in spite of constant air attack. Yet supplies arrived, and, on 29th April for example, Westphal proposed to make a special issue of artillery ammunition to bring *AOK 10's* stocks up to three 'issues' for most of its field guns.[75] On 30th April Kesselring told *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* that the fuel available to their mobile reserves was to be brought up to five consumption units so that the formations concerned could move off at short notice.[76] Thus fuel and ammunition were there, but the German belief that no Allied offensive impended is suggested by the facts that in early May von Altenstadt of 14th Panzer Corps followed von Senger on leave, and on 11th May (D day for the offensive) von Vietinghoff left for Hitler's headquarters in order to receive a decoration.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

1944

Comm	elds d Gs.	Albania L. of C. & other Targets	Greece L. of C. & other Targets	Crete Airfields and L.Gs.	Bomber Total: Day / Night
M.A.A. (excl.	— / —	— / —	— / —	— / —	9110 / 120x
	— / —	— / —	— / 1	— / —	3986 / 776x
	— / —	— / —	— / —	— / —	1827 / 491
	— / —	119 / —	16 / —	— / —	12078 / 78
R.A.F.	— / —	— / —	— / —	36 / 22	36 / 22
	— / —	— / —	— / —	6 / 10	6 / 10
	— / —	— / —	4 / —	— / —	4 / —
TOT	00 / —	119 / —	20 / 1	42 / 32	27047 / 1497

TAL SORTIES FLOWN = 60,345 or 1,472 every 24 hours.

II

FORT—19 MAR

US L. OF C. TA

(4362) sorties against n
he Pisa–Rimini line.
alling yards attacked

1) sorties against marsh

1s of Baltimores were s
operate by day.
flying squadrons of D.

f U.S. XII A.S.C. were

) sorties against railwa

sorties against marsha

l of 2690(5645.2) sorti

VII for details of attac

VII for details of attac

Digitized by Google

CH–11/12 MAY, 1944

RGETS (BOMBLOADS SHOWN IN BRACKETS) NORTH OF THE BATTLE AREA

	REMARKS
marshalling yards and 164(360) against railway bridges and other railway targets, all north of the Pisa–Rimini line.	
were north of the Pisa–Rimini line.	
halling yards, 127(217) against railway bridges etc., and 25(40) against roads, all north of the Pisa–Rimini line.	
witched to night bombing in May (from the night of the 2nd/3rd onwards), the remaining Baltimore squadrons	
A.F. operated under the operational control of U.S. XII A.S.C., one squadron in April and two in May.	
: almost entirely employed in the battle area, the few targets attacked beyond the battle area being mainly dumps.	
y targets and 4(1) against unidentifiable L. of C. targets, all north of the Pisa–Rimini line.	
lling yard north of the Pisa–Rimini line.	
es against marshalling yards, railway bridges etc., and roads, all north of the Pisa–Rimini line.	
ks on ports in April and May.	*NOTE* (1) It is impossible to calculate the number of strafing sorties carried out by all kinds of aircraft, particularly the fighters, against land and sea targets in support of Operation 'Strangle'. There is, however, enough evidence to show that strafing was carried out on a very large scale.
ks on shipping in April and May.	(2) The figures of sorties and bombloads in the above table were initially compiled from a single document amended by others as and when discrepancies, contradictions or omissions came to light. These were resolved to the best of our ability and the final figures are considered reasonably accurate for our purpose.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

THE SPRING OFFENSIVE: PLANS OF THE ALLIED ARMIES, CORPS, AND AIR FORCES

(i)

WE must now try to give a bird's-eye view of the terrain in which 8th Army and 5th Army (less 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio) would begin their offensive on the night 11th-12th May. The view is one of rivers, high mountains, lesser hills, and valleys. Spring was advancing towards summer, and the weather was in general warm and dry, although sudden storms of rain might break, which softened the surface of fields and of unmetalled tracks. Vehicles soon churned this soft surface either into billowing dust or deep mud. Trees which had escaped the shattering blast of shells and bombs were in full leaf, and crops and vines stood high in the untended fields and vineyards. The general area of the battle is shown on *Map 2*.

Three rivers lay in front of the armies.[1] The Rapido rose in the north and flowed southwards, past Mt Cassino and Cassino town on its western bank, until it met the Gari. The Gari rose in the hills close to Cassino town, circled the town's southern outskirts, and then flowed south-eastwards until it joined the Rapido about a mile and a half south of Cassino town. The united rivers then were known as the Gari, and flowed in a generally southerly direction across the mouth of the Liri valley until meeting the River Liri near S. Ambrogio where their name changed to Garigliano. The Garigliano then flowed southwards until it entered the sea near Puntafiume, south of Minturno. As explained in the footnote on page 2 the Rapido's change of name caused confusion in contemporary documents and maps. Sometimes the Gari and Rapido are distinguished but more often the united rivers are simply called the Rapido. We adopt the correct topographical nomenclature in our narrative.

Our view of the mountains need begin no further north than Mt Cairo (Pt 1669). From this summit a long spur runs south-eastward to Mt Castellone (Pt 771) and continues until it ends in

Digitized by Google

the promontory of Mt Cassino which towers above Cassino town. At Cassino town the mountains give way to the Liri valley which runs nearly east to west and is about six miles wide at its eastern end. We will return to this valley when we have finished with the mountains. Between the south side of the Liri valley and the sea stands the mass of the Aurunci mountains about twelve miles deep from north to south and twenty miles across from east to west. The eastern face of this mountain mass looms over the lower Rapido and the Garigliano and the highest point on it is Mt Majo (Pt 940), three thousand feet high. From this peak the mountains run southwards, decreasing in height, to Colle Salvatito (Pt 242) and then south-westward to the hills around Minturno. The mass of the Aurunci mountains is split, in the first place by the Ausente stream which is born near the village of Ausonia and runs southwards into the Garigliano river south of Minturno. The valley of the Ausente carries a secondary road which runs up it from Minturno, climbs over the mountains near Ausonia, and then debouches through many defiles into the Liri valley near S. Giorgio. The second split in the mountain mass is the north-south valley between Pico and Itri. This valley also carries a road.

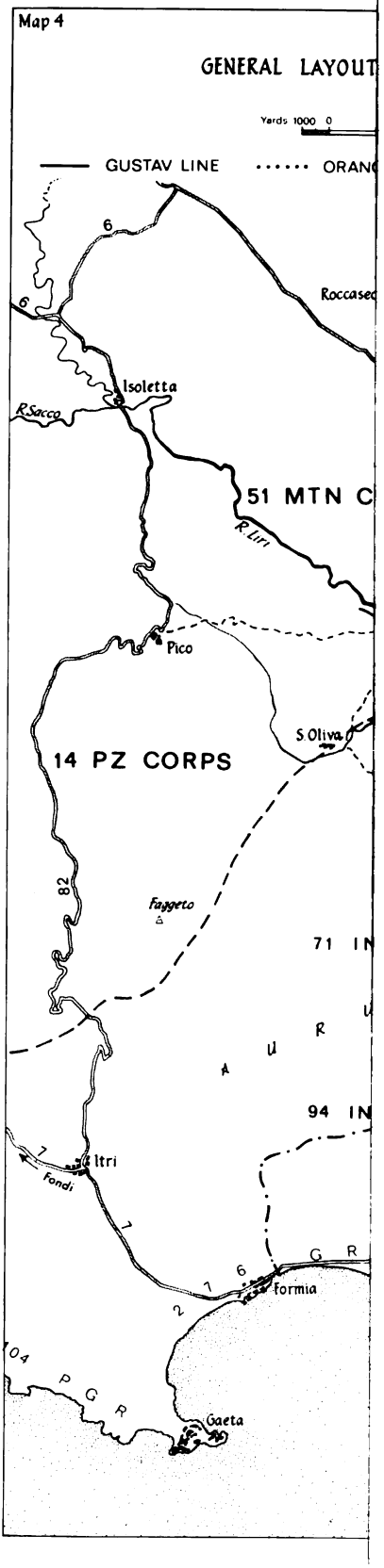
We now turn to the Liri valley which is about twenty miles long from west to east. Between Cassino town and the Liri the valley is about six miles across but for the greater part of its length this width decreases to three or four miles. The River Liri flows along the south side of the valley in serpentine bends and is not fordable. The ground is at first sight undulating and includes pasture, cornland, and woodland, but on closer acquaintance turns out to be quite broken, providing poor 'going' for wheels and tracks. Highway 6 runs along the northern side of the valley. At its western end the Liri valley leads into the Sacco valley through which Highway 6 runs to Rome.

On the coast of the Gulf of Gaeta there is a narrow strip of flat land between the Aurunci mountains and the sea. This coastal strip carries the second great road to Rome, Highway 7.

The main German belts of defensive positions on the main front are shown on *Map 4*. They were the Gustav Line and the Hitler Line, which was renamed the Senger Line in January 1944. The Allies however stuck to the grander name and we also shall call it the Hitler Line. The part of the Gustav Line which concerns us at this point ran, north to south, from Mt Cifalco (Pt 947) to Mt Cairo (Pt 1669), then to Colle S. Angelo (Pt 601) and Cassino, then across the mouth of the Liri valley and behind the Gari river, and then along the eastern face of the Aurunci mountains and behind the

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Garigliano river to the coast north-west of Minturno. The Hitler Line, some miles to the west of the Gustav Line, ran generally southwards from Mt Cairo to Piedimonte, Aquino, Pontecorvo, Mt Faggeto (Pt 1259), Fondi, and Terracina on the coast. Two lines of defensive positions subsidiary to the Hitler Line had been partly prepared.[2] The first, named Dora, took off from the Hitler Line near S. Oliva, and then ran to Esperia and round the lower slopes of Mt Fammera to Gaeta. The second, named Orange, ran from a point east of S. Apollinare–Vallemaio–Coreno–Mt la Civita. The purpose of the Orange Line was to bar the Ausonia valley against a force advancing northwards from Minturno. Dora would serve as a layback of the Gustav Line or as an outwork of the Hitler Line according to circumstances.

In addition there was the Cäsar Line covering Rome and the so called Pisa–Rimini Line in the northern Apennines (*see Map 1*)*.

Headquarters A.A.I. issued Alexander's Operation Order for the offensive on 5th May.[3] It had this to say about the action to be expected from the Germans:

> '. . . the enemy will fight stubbornly for his present positions [Gustav Line], and . . . further resistance is to be expected on the Piedimonte–Pontecorvo line [Hitler Line], for the defence of which all reserves at the disposal of the German Tenth Army are likely to be used. It is also expected that when driven from these positions the enemy will make every effort to stabilize his front south of Rome by organized resistance on the general llne North of Avezzano–Valmontone–Velletri [Cäsar Line]. For the defence of that line all reserves of the German Fourteenth and Tenth Armies are likely to be deployed.
> (b) Once the enemy has been driven North of Rome, it is probable that he will withdraw fighting to the Rimini–Pisa line [Gothic Line] imposing the maximum delay on our advance by strong mobile rear guards and demolitions.'

Alexander expressed his intention thus:

> 'To destroy the right wing of the German Tenth Army: to drive what remains of it and the German Fourteenth Army North of Rome; and to pursue the enemy to the Rimini–Pisa line inflicting the maximum losses on him in the process.'

---

* The term 'Pisa–Rimini line' was first used by the Allies to describe the region of Italy to which they intended to advance. The term 'caught on' and was used more and more vaguely. At this date we find that the 'Pisa–Rimini line' is chiefly used by the Allies to mean the German 'Apennine position' which was re-named by them on 25th April 1944 the 'Gothic Line'.[3]

Digitized by Google

He could not have expressed more clearly that the object of the coming battles was to destroy the German armies, and not simply to capture this place or that.

Next came the tasks of the Armies:

> '(a) *Eighth Army* will:
>
> (i) Break through the enemy's position into the Liri valley and advance on the general axis of Highway 6 to the area East of Rome.
>
> (ii) Pursue the enemy on the general axis Terni–Perugia.
>
> (iii) Thereafter advance on Ancona and Florence, the main objective at that stage to be decided later.
>
> (b) *Fifth Army* will:
>
> (i) Capture the Ausonia defile and advance on an axis generally parallel to that of Eighth Army but South of the Liri and Sacco rivers.
>
> (ii) Launch an attack from the Anzio Bridgehead on the general axis Cori–Valmontone to cut Highway 6 in the Valmontone area, and thereby prevent the supply and withdrawal of the troops of the German Tenth Army opposing the advance of Eighth and Fifth Armies.
>
> (iii) Pursue the enemy North of Rome and capture the Viterbo airfields and the port of Civitavecchia.
>
> (iv) Thereafter advance on Leghorn.'

Fifth Corps (under direct command of H.Q. A.A.I. on the Adriatic front) was given its separate tasks:

> '. . . hold its present front with the minimum of troops; will harass the enemy; and will vigorously pursue him should he attempt to withdraw, inflicting the maximum losses on him in the process.'

Alexander mentioned also three subsidiary operations: the capture of Elba by French troops under the command of A.F.H.Q., a possible sea-borne operation by 5th Army to capture Civitavecchia; and a possible sea-borne operation by 5th Corps to capture Ancona. In the event the second and third operations were not required.

There are some points of interest which underlie Alexander's order. In the first place experience in Africa and Italy had shown him that in any large set-piece attack one should expect to fight for two or three weeks before obtaining a decision.[4] He thought that he might have to fight two battles on the scale of Alamein (12 days) before reaching Rome but he was counting on advancing at the rate

Digitized by Google

of four miles a day.* In the second place, in view of later operations of General Clark's own devising, there is the clear direction that 5th Army was to launch an attack from Anzio to cut Highway 6 in the Valmontone area. Alexander required 6th U.S. Corps to be at twenty-four hours' notice to make this attack from inclusive D + 4, and reserved for himself the decision when to order it to begin.

Next we outline the plans of 8th and 5th Armies.

General Leese, like Alexander, issued as little paper as possible. He sent out no formal operation order to his Corps commanders to confirm his short directive dated 11th April.[5] His method was to announce his plans, to consider details, and to give his decisions at conferences called as necessary and attended by all concerned. This method made it possible for simultaneous planning to go on, on the right lines, at every level.

His intention was simply

> 'To break through the enemy's main front in the Liri valley and advance on Rome.'

His method was a simultaneous attack by two Corps: on the right the Polish Corps (Lieutenant-General Anders) operating north of Cassino town, and on the left 13th Corps (Lieutenant-General Kirkman) operating in the Liri valley. He directed each Corps to attack in two phases as follows:

Polish Corps

I. 1. 'Isolate the area Monastery Hill [Mt Cassino]–Cassino from the north and north-west and dominate Highway 6 until a junction is effected with 13 Corps.
   2. Attack and capture Monastery Hill.

II. 1. Gain contact with the Adolf Hitler Line North of Highway 6 and develop operations with a view to turning it from the North.'

13 *Corps*

I. 1. 'Capture and secure a bridgehead over the river Rapido [Gari] between Cassino and the Liri river.
   2. Isolate Cassino from the West: cut Highway 6 and effect a junction with 2 Polish Corps.
   3. Clear Cassino of the enemy and open up Highway 6.

II. 1. Gain contact with the Adolf Hitler Line South of Highway 6 and develop operations against it with a view to a break through.'

---

* In fact the average pace of advance from the River Rapido to Rome turned out to be from three miles to a little under four miles a day on Highway 6.

Digitized by Google

There was nothing novel in this part of Leese's plan and indeed the shape of the ground almost dictated it. He believed there was room enough on 8th Army's front to deploy four divisions abreast, but operations in the Liri valley could not, he thought, succeed while the enemy held the commanding ground of Monastery Hill. This ground therefore had to be captured. On the other hand a simultaneous attack in the Liri valley would greatly help a force which was attacking Monastery Hill. And so two simultaneous operations of quite different kinds suggested themselves as 8th Army's first step: one an operation of mountain warfare on the massif of Mt Castellone and Monastery Hill; the other an opposed river crossing in the Liri valley. It was logical to allot a self-contained Corps to each operation, and to make the Liri valley the area for a decisive advance because he thought that there was no prospect of breaking the barrier formed by Mt Cairo and the Cassino massif without a mountain Corps which 8th Army did not possess. The possibility of an advance through the mountains to Atina and then down the valley of the Melfa into the Liri valley, advocated by mountain men like Juin and Tuker, had been carefully examined by Leese and discarded during March.[6] Of the Corps in 8th Army, 13th had three experienced infantry divisions and one armoured division and so was well adapted to make at least the beginnings of a break through in the Liri valley. The Polish Corps had two two-brigade divisions which were about as many as could be maintained in a battle on the Cassino massif. Moreover Leese correctly judged, as Anders' memoirs show, that the Poles would positively welcome a task in which American, British and Commonwealth troops had failed, as an opportunity to show their fighting quality.[7]

Leese chose 1st Canadian Corps (Lieutenant-General Burns) as his reserve because it was well adapted to exploit any success gained by 13th Corps in the Liri valley since it contained an armoured and an infantry division, an organization which had shown itself to be handy, mobile, and hard-hitting. Leese had in mind a situation of the following nature. 5th Army would be making progress south of the River Liri. His own 13th Corps would have made its bridgehead over the Gari and would be in the middle of stern fighting to isolate Cassino town and join hands with the Poles, a battle in which all its three infantry divisions would probably be engaged. He might then order the Canadian Corps to cross the Gari south of S. Angelo and to operate on the left of 13th Corps. The Canadian operations might be to break through to the west while 13th Corps finished its task at Cassino, or to help in the battle which was being fought by 13th Corps and the Polish Corps. Leese was hoping for the break through. He was counting greatly on the power of his artillery in the coming battle: about 1,000 guns of which about

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

300 would be deployed in the Polish Corps' sector and 700 in that of 13th Corps.* 10th Corps' task was to hold its positions in the mountains on 8th Army's right flank with the fewest possible troops: to be ready to release formations to the main battle: and to make the enemy believe that an attack would be made towards Atina.

General Clark had two fronts to consider when making his plan for 5th Army. The first was the tract of mountain country which faced him immediately west of the River Garigliano: the second was the twenty-five mile perimeter held by 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio. The Anzio front was about seventy-three miles from his main front by land, and some sixty miles by sea. The first marked characteristic of the terrain which lay between Clark's two fronts was the chain of steep and rugged mountains which stretched north-westwards from the Garigliano. The chain was formed by three distinct ranges, in order from south-east to north-west: the Aurunci, Ausoni, and Lepini mountains. These ranges were bounded on the north by the Liri and Sacco valleys and on the south by the sea, and the average distance between these boundaries was from fifteen to twenty miles. The second marked characteristic was the scarcity of good roads leading north-westward. There was the fine Highway 7 which crossed the Garigliano south of Minturno, followed the coast to Formia, then turned inland to Fondi and back again to the coast at Terracina, and from there ran north-westward, at a distance of about eight miles inland from the coast, to Velletri, the Alban Hills and Rome. There were no roads crossing the Aurunci mountains from east to west or north-west and the Ausoni and Lepini mountains were little better provided.

The three ranges of mountains and the scarcity of roads set Clark difficult problems. It was clear that to cram Highway 7 and the coast road with the bulk of 5th Army would result only in two snails crawling along on narrow fronts. Juin's influence, however, had begun to bear on 5th Army's thinking soon after Alexander's second conference on 25th March.[9] Juin had taken over his sector of the Garigliano front on 25th March and had drawn attention to the

---

* In fact 8th Army's artillery opened fire with 1,100.[8]

8th Army's gun state on 12th May was:

155-mm guns	16
7.2-inch howitzer	31
5.5-inch gun	152
4.5-inch gun	108
105-mm S.P.	108
25-pdr gun	754
75-mm pack howitzer	24
	1,193

Digitized by Google

possibility of outflanking the German defences in the Liri valley with an advance by his mountain-trained F.E.C. through the Aurunci mountains. Clark tentatively accepted Juin's ideas and decided to use the whole width of his fronts, roads or no roads. He decided, too, to bite off his mountain ranges one by one, beginning with the Aurunci. In his Field Order dated 20th April he therefore stated 5th Army's task as follows:[10]

> '*Mission.* Fifth Army from present Garigliano positions attacks with Corps abreast, secures Ausonia defile, advances South of the Liri River to cut the Pico–Itri road . . . Subsequent advances on Army Order.'

As regards the Anzio front it was too early to foresee what the situation would be when Alexander ordered Clark to unleash 6th U.S. Corps, and so Clark provided for every possibility:

> 'VI Corps – be prepared to attack within forty-eight hours of receipt of Army Order in any of the following directions:
>
> 1. Ardea
> 2. Albano
> 3. Cisterna–Cori
> 4. Littoria–Sezze.'

See Map 5

In tackling the Aurunci mountains Clark had some advantages. He had in Juin's French Expeditionary Corps four divisions and nine tabors of goums well suited to mountain warfare.* As Juin remarked, 'This is the warfare to which we are accustomed.'[12] His divisions were commanded by hard-driving officers who knew that the re-establishment of French military reputation lay in their hands. The challenge of breaching the Aurunci mountains appealed to them and created an enthusiasm which was to carry them forward with an indifference to fatigue and to the difficulties of the terrain rarely surpassed. It was fortunate too, that the F.E.C. possessed in its 6,760 mules one of the means of transport essential in mountain warfare and, when the time came, the Americans provided another by dropping supplies from aircraft.

Another advantage which Clark possessed was the bridgehead across the Garigliano which 10th Corps had gained in January and February. Small though this was, it was deep enough to hold the

---

* A Group of Tabors was the equivalent of a brigade of irregular infantry; a Tabor was the equivalent of a battalion; a goum the equivalent of a company.[11] Goum is derived from the Arabic word *qum* = a band or troop. The Goumier was a Moroccan irregular soldier, usually recruited from the Berber mountaineers of the Atlas, and commanded by French officers and non-commissioned officers. A Tabor usually included Headquarters, one Heavy Weapons Goum (mortars and m.g.s) and three Goums. Its strength was about 65 French officers and NCOs, and 859 Native NCOs and men, with 247 horses and mules. A Group was composed of HQ and three Tabors, strength about 3,100.

Digitized by Google

numbers of men and dumps of supplies needed in reasonable concealment. Seven bridges had been built across the Garigliano. Most of these could be seen by the German observers on the hills west of the river, and so, from 5th April, the bridges were covered by smoke daily and on moonlit nights.

Clark decided to attack with the F.E.C. on the right and on the left 2nd U.S. Corps (Keyes) consisting of 85th and 88th U.S. Divisions and an armoured group. He thus wisely gave the stiffest mountain country to the mountain-trained French and the slightly less difficult country to the American divisions. These had trained as much as time and circumstances allowed for mountain warfare but had much to learn, and moreover had not yet experienced battle.

Clark foresaw four phases in the operations to penetrate the Aurunci mountains and to clear them of the enemy.[13] The objective in the first phase was the Ausonia–Formia road. The F.E.C. would take the key feature of Mt Majo, and the Ausonia defile. They would be assisted by 2nd U.S. Corps on their left attacking across the Ausente valley, west of Castelforte, to capture S. Maria Infante, with a second thrust towards Castellonorato through Trimonsuoli. The objective of 2nd U.S. Corps in this phase was the stretch of the lateral road between Ausonia and Formia which lay within its sector. In the second phase the F.E.C. would strike north-westwards through the mountains between Mt Majo and the Garigliano into the Liri valley. The French 'Mountain Corps' had a separate and specially arduous task: to infiltrate westwards across the Aurunci mountains by way of the roadless masses of Mt Fammera and Mt Petrella to seize Mt Revole which was some four miles from the Pico–Itri lateral road.* In the second phase 2nd U.S. Corps was to cross the Ausonia–Formia road and capture Mt la Civita and Castellonorato. In the third phase the F.E.C. and 2nd U.S. Corps would advance to the Pico–Itri road, the French seizing Esperia and Mt d'Oro on the way, the Americans clearing the coastal area on the line Mt Scauri–Formia–Itri. In the fourth phase the F.E.C. and 2nd U.S. Corps would advance across the Pico–Itri road, the French thrusting forward from the neighbourhood of Mt Revole, the Americans through the coastal strip. Clark's whole plan was bold and vigorous, and had novelty in the infiltration by the F.E.C. of the northern part of the Aurunci mountains on many simultaneous thrust lines. This part of the plan must be ascribed mostly to Juin

* Juin had grouped together his 4th Moroccan Mountain Division and the three Groups of Tabors of Moroccan Goums, and had named the resulting formation the Mountain Corps.

Digitized by Google

who recognised that the mountains, which were generally believed to be mostly impassable to troops, were a fair field for the special talents of his own divisions.

For artillery support 5th Army disposed of about 600 guns of calibres from 75-mm to 240-mm.[14] Some 16,238 tons of ammunition were available for the opening of the offensive. Artillery support was to begin with a quick and smashing blow at the enemy's known gun positions, in which concentrations were to be fired at the rates of between 24 and 48 rounds in two minutes. After 40 minutes in the F.E.C.'s sector and after 80 minutes in 2nd Corps' sector, the Corps' artillery would switch to German command posts, reserves, dumps, and communications while divisional artilleries engaged targets at shorter ranges as required by divisional commanders. A cruiser was placed at the disposal of 2nd U.S. Corps from D day to D + 5 to engage dumps and heavy guns near Itri, and targets on the road from Formia to Itri and near Mt Scauri and Sperlonga on the coast north-west of Gaeta.

See Map 3

The plans of the various Allied air forces for the coming offensive differed from the plans of the land forces. Whereas the latter were planning a new offensive, the former planned to continue operations in progress and to adapt them to the requirements of the offensive on land. The air operations in progress were, if we consider Italy only, of two main kinds: to subdue the German air force, and to induce the withdrawal of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* by destroying German rail, road, and sea communications south of the line Pisa–Rimini.

On 28th April the Air Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant-General Ira C. Eaker, issued an outline plan for the Mediterranean Allied Air Force, the principal object of which was to make it impossible for the Germans to maintain their forces in Italy on the lines which they held, against a combined air and land offensive.[15] Eaker directed his air forces to perform three main tasks. The first task was to neutralise the German air force in Italy by counter-air force operations. An ineffective German air force could not interfere with the Allies' operations on land or with the second main task of the Allied air forces. The second main task was to maintain the disruption of German supply routes and to destroy the stockpiles of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* in the battle area in order to weaken the German defence. And the third task was to give direct air support to the land forces.

Eaker divided his plan into three phases:

Preparatory Phase

During the twelve days before D day M.A.S.A.F. was to attack airfields in northern Italy and southern France on which concen-

Digitized by Google

trations of aircraft had been spotted. Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force was to attack German airfields in central Italy. Air attacks on the German communications were to be stepped up, and M.A.S.A.F. was to attack the west coast ports of Genoa, Spezia, Leghorn, Piombino, S. Stefano, and any others that Intelligence might suggest. In general the air forces were to destroy dumps in the following order of priority: petrol and oil: ammunition; other kinds of supplies. No 'softening-up' attacks were to be launched against the land forces' objectives so as not to risk putting the enemy on his guard.

Assault Phase

Duration was not defined. Attacks on the German communications were to be continued and if these attacks enforced an enemy withdrawal, the air forces were to interdict his withdrawal routes to help the Allied land forces complete the destruction. Counter-air force operations were to be carried out if required. Direct air support was to be given to the land forces whenever required. M.A.S.A.F. was to destroy German headquarters, chosen by M.A.A.F., as early as possible on D day, and was to repeat the attacks as late as possible in the afternoon in order to stop the Germans repairing the morning's damage. M.A.S.A.F. was to be ready also to launch, at short notice between D day and D + 10, attacks 'to assist the favourable development of the situation.' M.A.T.A.F. was to be ready to drop a battalion of parachute troops on request.

Sustained Offensive Phase

Duration was not defined. M.A.T.A.F. was to continue to support the land offensive in any way that might be required. M.A.S.A.F. was to return to its normal strategic role but was to be ready to act against any good tactical targets which might appear if the German armies withdrew northwards. Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force was to continue to perform its normal maritime duties, but was to be ready to deal with any increase in German coastal traffic which might occur. Meantime, the attacks on the enemy's land and sea communications were to continue.

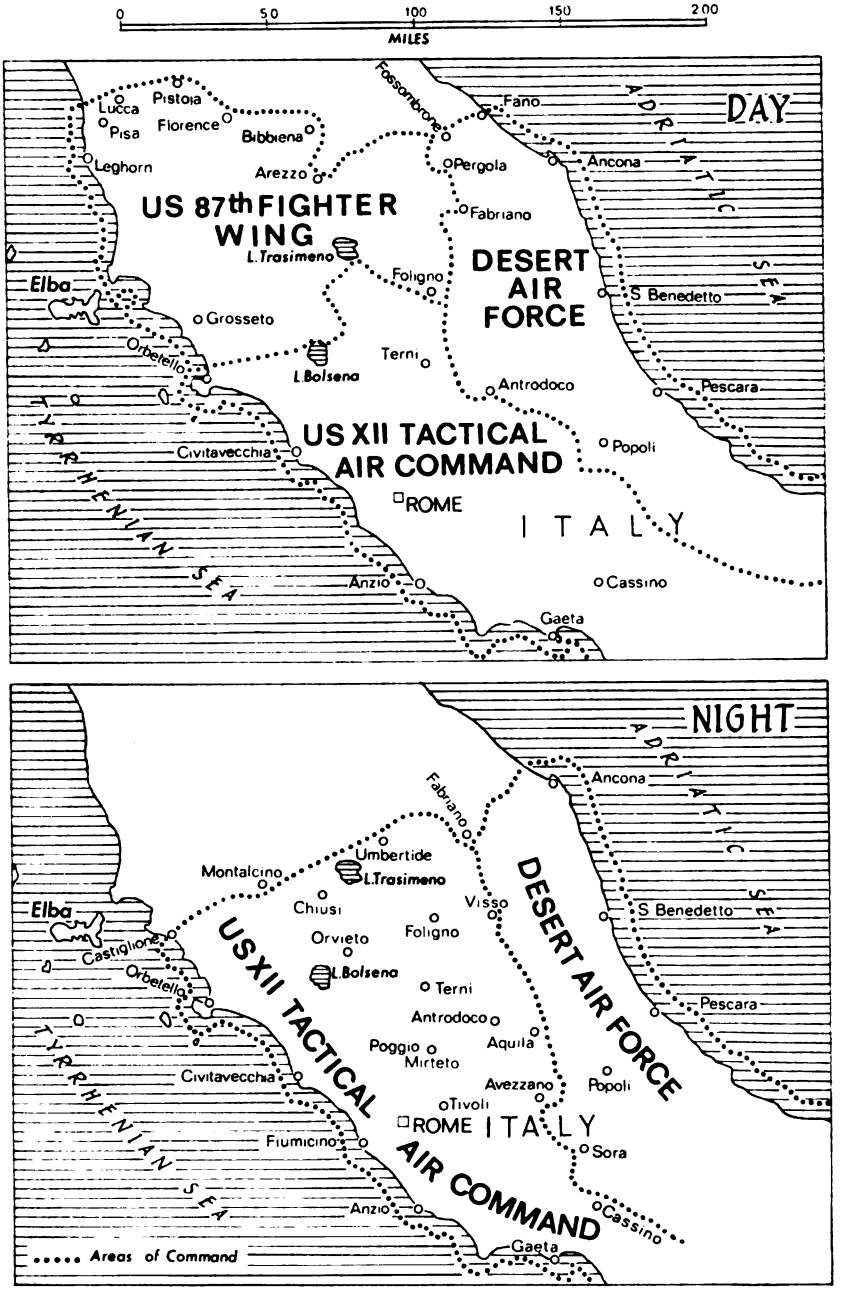
M.A.A.F. and subordinate air headquarters issued no further directives until the opening of the offensive. M.A.A.F. issued orders on 12th May which altered only the employment of M.A.S.A.F. during daylight on 12th and 13th May. The strategic air force was directed to attack Kesselring's Headquarters at Mt Soratte (Pt 691), thirty miles north of Rome, *AOK 10's* Headquarters a few miles north of Avezzano, and the ports and harbours of Genoa, Spezia, Leghorn, Piombino, S. Stefano, and Porto Ferraio on the island of Elba. The strategic air force was also to attack the marshalling-yard at Leghorn and was to block the Genoa–Spezia railway line. The remainder of the strategic air force's effort was to be directed against

Digitized by Google

Map 6

OPERATION DIADEM: M.A.T.A.F.

Areas allocated to sub-formations for attacks on enemy land and sea communications



Digitized by Google

marshalling-yards north of the Pisa–Rimini line, and any fighters which could be spared from duty as escorts to the bombers were to be used offensively. The tasks of the bombers were divided into 'first mission' and 'second mission'. Against 'first mission' targets the maximum number of heavy bombers were to be used. None were to be kept in hand for any reason, and double sorties were to be flown. The effort against 'second mission' targets was to be at 'maximum sustained rate'.*

On 10th May Major-General John K. Cannon (Commanding General of M.A.T.A.F.) issued directives to U.S. XII Tactical Air Command (Brigadier-General Gordon P. Saville) and Desert Air Force (Air Vice-Marshal W. F. Dickson).† The first directive gave Saville and Dickson the areas within which their formations were to operate by day and by night. These areas are shown in *Map 6*. The second directive described M.A.T.A.F.'s principal task as 'to maintain the destruction and disruption already caused to the enemy's land and sea communications.' Touching direct support, the broad object was to prevent the enemy from moving into, out of, or within, the area in which 5th Army planned to fight its first battles, 'to isolate the battlefield' in the military language of the day. Direct support of 8th Army was to help neutralize artillery which the Germans might bring to bear on the river crossings. The second directive gave a list of targets as a guide to achieving the general objects. Since 23rd March Brigadier-General Saville had been responsible (under General Cannon's direction) for providing the air support for 5th and 8th Armies, and for co-ordinating the tactical reconnaissance requirements of both armies. He had established small staffs at the headquarters of each army to enable him to fulfil these responsibilities, and it was decided that this arrangement should continue until the armies had advanced north of Rome. For the work of tactical reconnaissance west of the Apennines U.S. Tactical Air Command had been reinforced since before 23rd March by squadrons from the Desert Air Force, and arrangements were now made for it to lend more tactical reconnaissance squadrons to U.S. XII T.A.C. For artillery reconnaissance three squadrons were allotted to 8th Army, two to 5th Army. 'Rover David' (the name for giving immediate direct air support by the Cabrank method) was at the service of every division in 13th Corps, for the Polish Corps as a whole, and for 6th Army Group R.A. 'Rover Joe' (the American version of 'Rover David') was provided for 5th

---

* A double sortie means two operational flights by an aircraft during one day. Maximum sustained rate was the level which could be sustained for long periods.

† U.S. XII Tactical Air Command was the new name of the former U.S. XII Air Support Command.

Digitized by Google

Army.* A formation which somehow escaped mention in any directive was the Mediterranean Allied Photographic Reconnaissance Wing. This Wing nevertheless was doing invaluable work producing photographs of the terrain for distribution down to company commanders as well as the photographs which were required daily for 'Strangle'. It played a major part in the Spring offensive.

The Allied air commanders had the advantage of overwhelming superiority. On 12th May the Allied air forces based in Italy, Sardinia and Corsica disposed of some 3,960 operational aircraft excluding air transports. The German Air Force, which was directly opposed to them amounted to about 565 operational aircraft disposed as follows:

In Italy: 343 aircraft, which included 103 bombers and dive-bombers and 200 fighters and fighter-bombers.

In Southern France: 222 aircraft, which included 125 bombers and 61 single-engine and twin-engine fighters.

The Order of Battle of Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, as on 12th May, is given at Appendix 1.

(ii)

See Maps 2 (*incl. inset*) *and* 4

At the beginning of May *AOK 10*, which held a line from coast to coast in Italy between Minturno and Torre Mucchia, consisted of nine divisions. *AOK 14*, which encircled the Allied force at Anzio, consisted of six divisions. With the Hermann Göring Panzer Division as *OKW* reserve near Leghorn there were three divisions in Kesselring's Army Group reserve, namely: 29th Panzer Grenadier Division a short distance north of Rome between Tarquinia and Lake Bracciano; 90th Panzer Grenadier Division split, with 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment south of the Tiber estuary and 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment at Acuto and Alatri in the hills on the north side of the Sacco valley: 26th Panzer Division also split, with a battalion of 26th Panzer Regiment and 67th Panzer Grenadier Regiment at Lake Nemi in the Alban hills, and 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment at Sezze. In northern Italy was *Armeegruppe von Zangen* which consisted of four divisions and a hotch-potch of independent

* The Cabrank meant maintaining in the air a succession of fighter-bomber formations, each of six aircraft, and keeping each formation for a short time over or near the front line, ready to be called down on a fleeting target by an air controller of a Forward Fighter Control. This was in fact a Visual Control Post (V.C.P.) when a target could be observed, but had also to be prepared to act as a Forward Control Post (F.C.P.) when a target could not be observed, in which case a gridded photo-mosaic was used for briefing the leaders of the air support formations.

Digitized by Google

infantry regiments, artillery units, Fortress Regiments and the like. The outline Order of Battle of Kesselring's Army Group C on 11th May was:

Commander and C.-in-C. Southwest: Field Marshal Albert Kesselring.

AOK 10

Commander: Colonel-General Heinrich-Gottfried von Vietinghoff.

14th Panzer Corps (General Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin);
- 15th Panzer Grenadier Division (Major-General Eberhard Rodt).
- 94th Infantry Division (Major-General Bernhard Steinmetz).
- 71st Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Wilhelm Raapke).

51st Mountain Corps (General Valentin Feuerstein).
- 44th Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Bruno Ortner, who had replaced Lieutenant-General Friedrich Franek on 1st May).
- 1st Parachute Division (Lieutenant-General Richard Heidrich).
- 5th Mountain Division (Major-General Max Schrank).
- 114th Jäger Division (Major-General Alexander Bourquin).

Korpsgruppe Hauck (Major-General Friedeich-Wilhelm Hauck).
- 305th Infantry Division (Major-General Hauck).
- 334th Infantry Division (Major-General Hellmuth Böhlke).

Army Group Reserve (Major-General Ernst-Günther Baade).
- 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division.

AOK 14

Commander: Colonel-General Eberhard von Mackensen.

1st Parachute Corps (General Alfred Schlemm).
- 4th Parachute Division (Major-General Heinrich Trettner).
- 65th Infantry Division (Major-General Hellmuth Pfeifer).
- 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division (Lieutenant-General Fritz-Hubert Gräser).

76th Panzer Corps (General Traugott Herr).
- 362nd Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Heinrich Greiner).
- 715th Infantry Division (Major-General Hans-Georg Hildebrandt).

Castiglione della Pescaia (west of Grosseto) Tiber coastal command
- 92nd Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Werner Göritz).

Army Group reserves
- 29th Panzer Grenadier Division (Lieutenant-General Walter Fries).
- 26th Panzer Division (General Smilo von Lüttwitz).
- Most of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division (Major-General Ernst-Günther Baade).

Digitized by Google

*Armeegruppe von Zangen**
Commander: General Gustav von Zangen.
75th Corps (General Anton Dostler).
356th Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Karl Faulenbach).
162nd (Turkoman) Division (Major-General Oskar von Niedermayer).
Corps Witthöft (General Jaochim Witthöft, commanding Eastern Sub-Alpine region).
188th Mountain Reserve Division (Lieutenant-General Hans von Hösslin).
Elements of 278th Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Harry Hoppe).
Corps Kübler (General Ludwig Kübler, commanding Adriatic coastal region).
Bulk of 278th Infantry Division (Hoppe).
OKW reserve
Herman Göring Panzer Parachute Division (Major-General Benno Schmalz). (†)

We have noticed in the previous chapter the various opinions held by senior German commanders in Italy of what the Allies intended and what they might do next.[16] At the end of April there was general agreement that 14th Panzer Corps' front might be attacked in several places at once, and that the Allies would probably accompany their offensive by local landings in, or north of, the Gulf of Gaeta. The senior commanders felt that in this eventuality Headquarters 14th Panzer Corps would have too much on its hands, and so, on 24th April, von Vietinghoff issued the preliminary orders for reorganization to which we referred in the first chapter. His final orders, issued on 7th May, additionally placed 1st Parachute Division under command of 51st Mountain Corps, and contracted 14th Panzer Corps' zone of command to the space between exclusive the river Liri and Terracina. The reorganisation had effect from 10th May, but the preceding fortnight was full of difficulties as regards the German Order of Battle and was markedly untidy. Decisions and orders were constantly overtaken by events for two main reasons. The first was the constant search for local reserves for 14th Panzer Corps and 51st Mountain Corps because they could not draw on the mobile divisions which Kesselring had taken into his Army Group reserve. Also the 'fighting strength' of *AOK 10's* divisions was low although satisfactory numbers of reinforcements

* In German military usage the term *Armeegruppe* denoted a staff temporarily organized to perform the functions of an Army Headquarters without having the organization or status of a regularly formed Army such as *AOK 10* or *14*. On 19th May 1944 this German command in North Italy was rechristened *Armeeabteilung von Zangen* which has the same denotation.

† The term 'Parachute' was purely honorary and will be dropped hereafter.

Digitized by Google

were arriving.* Secondly, Allied air attacks made moves of troops slow and irregular. The untidiness of the outline dispositions of 14th Panzer Corps and of 51st Mountain Corps, shown on *Map 4*, reflects not only the untidiness of the Order of Battle but also that the Allied offensive caught the Germans in the process of regrouping.

DISPOSITIONS IN OUTLINE OF 14th PANZER CORPS AND 51st MOUNTAIN CORPS, 11th MAY

Formation, Unit	Area
14th Panzer Corps (General Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin; General Otto Hartmann in acting command 18th April to 17th May)	
15th Panzer Grenadier Division (Major-General Eberhard Rodt) less 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment:	
104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment	Gaeta–Terracina
94th Infantry Division (Major-General Bernhard Steinmetz):	
276th Grenadier Regiment	Gaeta–Minturno
274th Grenadier Regiment	Minturno–River Ausente
267th Grenadier Regiment	Minturno–River Ausente
71st Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Wilhelm Raapke):	
211th Grenadier Regiment	River Ausente–Damiano (Pt 411)
194th Grenadier Regiment	Castelforte
191st Grenadier Regiment	Castelforte–Mt Faito–Mt Majo (Pt 940).
94th Füsilier Battalion (from 94th Infantry Division)	S. Maria Infante
114th Reconnaissance Battalion (from 114th Jäger Division)	S. Maria Infante
131st Grenadier Regiment (from 44th Infantry Division)	Vallemaio–S. Ambrogio
171st Reconnaissance Battalion	Vallemaio–S. Ambrogio

* The latest full return, before the beginning of the Allied offensive, of *AOK 10's* 'fighting strength' is that of 23rd April:[17]

15th Panzer Grenadier Division	8,499
71st Infantry Division	6,414
94th Infantry Division	7,955
5th Mountain Division	9,935
44th Infantry Division	8,443
114th Jäger Division	8,235
1st Parachute Division	4,627
305th Infantry Division	7,871
334th Infantry Division	8,090
Army and Corps Troops	11,863
	81,932

90th Panzer Grenadier Division, included in this return because it had not yet split, had a fighting strength of 8,206.

On 10th May the overall 'fighting strength' of *AOK 14* was 76,873.

Digitized by Google

Formation, Unit	Area
2nd Battalion 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 15th Panzer Grenadier Division)	Vallemaio
44th Reconnaissance Battalion (from 44th Infantry Division)	S. Andrea
115th Reconnaissance Battalion (from 15th Panzer Grenadier Division) from 13th May	—
51st Mountain Corps (General Valentin Feuerstein)	
H.Q. 44th Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Bruno Ortner):	
Bode Blocking Group (Colonel Bode, 305th Infantry Division)	
576th Grenadier Regiment (from 305th Infantry Division)	River Liri–S. Angelo
305th Füsilier Battalion (from 305th Infantry Division)	River Liri–S. Angelo
1st Battalion 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment	South of Cassino
3rd Battalion 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (both from 15th Panzer Grenadier Division)	South of Cassino
All the units above were formally placed under command of 1st Parachute Division at 8.50 p.m. 12th May.	
1st Parachute Division (Lieutenant-General Richard Heidrich):	
1st Parachute Regiment	Colle S. Magno, Roccasecca,
4th Parachute Regiment	Cassino town, Mt Cassino,
3rd Parachute Regiment	Albaneta Farm (Pt 468).
These regiments each had two battalions. Their third battalions had been sent away from Italy as training cadres.	
2nd Battalion 100th Mountain Regiment (from 5th Mountain Division)	Villa S. Lucia–Mt Cairo
4th Alpine Battalion	Villa S. Lucia–Mt Cairo
132nd Grenadier Regiment (from 44th Infantry Division)	Terelle–Belmonte
5th Mountain Division (Major-General Max Schrank):	
134th Grenadier Regiment (from 44th Infantry Division)	Belmonte–Mt Cifalco (Pt 947)
100th Mountain Regiment (less 2nd Battalion)	Mt Cifalco–S. Biagio
85th Mountain Regiment	S. Biagio
3rd Alpine Battalion	Mt Cavallo (Pt 2070)
114th Jäger Division (Major-General Alexander Bourquin):	
721st Jäger Regiment	Mt Mattone south of Alfedena–north-eastwards
741st Jäger Regiment	Mt Mattone south of Alfedena–north-eastwards

Digitized by Google

Some explanations are necessary concerning the formations and units listed in the table above.[18] On 11th May the Order of Battle of *AOK 10* was still changing, as were the boundaries between divisions and even between regiments. It is therefore possible to give only the areas in which formations were placed: the artillery, engineers, signals, etc. of divisions have been left out. Only those reconnaissance battalions (sometimes called Füsilier Battalions) which were detached from their divisions have been mentioned. In 1944 the Infantry Regiment of an Infantry Division usually consisted of two battalions but there were exceptions. The infantry of Panzer Grenadier Divisions and of other types of divisions were usually organized in three-battalion regiments. The strange collection of units under the command of 71st Infantry Division and of Headquarters 44th Division attracts attention as does the fact that one infantry regiment of 44th Infantry Division is under command of 1st Parachute Division, a second is under command of 5th Mountain Division, and a third is under command of 71st Infantry Division. Again there is the appearance in 51st Mountain Corps of a Grenadier Regiment of 305th Infantry Division under the name of the Bode Blocking Group.

The explanation of these oddities, other than the appearance of the Bode Blocking Group, goes back to the third battle of Cassino in the middle of March and to the superior commanders' long-standing wish to withdraw Rodt's 15th Panzer Grenadier Division to one place for rest and refit.[19] This Division thoroughly deserved a respite because as a whole or in part it had been fighting since the beginning of the campaign in Sicily. But the promised rest never came and the Division had been drawn northwards into the third battle of Cassino from front-line positions in the Liri valley. 71st Infantry Division had in consequence been ordered from time to time to extend northwards from the positions around Castelforte which it had occupied after arriving from Anzio in February. By 23rd April this Division had taken over all the positions formerly held by 15th Panzer Grenadier Division south of the Liri, and had acquired units from four other divisions. The most important of these was 131st Grenadier Regiment (44th Infantry Division) which had replaced parts of 15th Panzer Grenadier Division during March. 44th Infantry Division's other two regiments, 132nd and 134th Grenadier, like 131st Grenadier Regiment, had been much battered in the fighting on the Cassino massif during January and February. They had then remained in quasi-reserve in the Terelle–Belmonte area. On 23rd April Hartmann proposed, and Kesselring agreed, that 44th Infantry Division should take over the sector between the Liri and Cassino town. On 8th May therefore the commander of 44th Infantry Division, Ortner, and his Headquarters moved south,

Digitized by Google

but the two Grenadier Regiments remained where they were awaiting orders: 132nd was placed under command of 1st Parachute Division, and 134th under command of 5th Mountain Division for the time being. On 10th May Ortner took command of his new sector, in which the most important unit was the Bode Blocking Group, that is to say 576th Grenadier Regiment from 305th Infantry Division. This Blocking Group had, since December 1943, led an isolated and snowbound life high in the Maiella mountains and had been rewarded by the privilege of wearing the edelweiss, emblem of German Mountain Troops, on the head dress.[20] On 13th April Kesselring and von Veitinghoff agreed that the Regiment could well be spared for more active employment in the Liri valley, where it began to arrive on 17th April. Ortner's new command did not last long because at 8.50 p.m. on 12th May its units (as shown in the table) were placed under command of 1st Parachute Division.[21] Ortner and his headquarters however were not relieved of duties north of the Liri until 8 a.m. on 16th May.

Using the yardstick which placed German divisions in categories of their fitness for offensive or defensive assignments, *OKH* graded the divisions which were under command of *AOK 10* on 1st May as follows:*[22]

I. *Fit for any offensive task*
1st Parachute Division

II. *Fit for limited offensive tasks*
15th Panzer Grenadier Division
71st Infantry Division
305th Infantry Division
334th Infantry Division
5th Mountain Division

III. *Fit for any defensive task*
94th Infantry Division
44th Infantry Division
114th Jäger Division

The two Corps Commanders, Hartmann and Feuerstein, had no experience of large battles in Italy, and in this particular could not match McCreery, Kirkman, Keyes, Truscott, and Juin. To make matters worse for the Germans their regrouping was just beginning, whereas the Allies' was complete.

---

* The classification of the three Army Group reserve divisions (Hermann Göring Panzer Division was not classified) was:

I. 29th Panzer Grenadier Division

II. 26th Panzer Division.
90th Panzer Grenadier Division.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

The first eleven days of May added nothing to the views and expectations of the higher German commanders and staff officers in or outside Italy which have been described in Chapter I.[23] The supremacy of the Allied air forces prevented German tactical air reconnaissance, and anything except haphazard strategic air reconnaissance. Between 1st and 11th May *AOK 10* took only fifteen prisoners from 5th and 8th Armies: three American, eight British, and four Indian. Their interrogation yielded only misleading crumbs of information: 85th U.S. Division was placed south of Minturno: 4th (British) Division was thought to have two brigades forward and one in reserve, and to be in contact with 78th Division near S. Angelo: 24th Guards Brigade was said to have relieved part of 3rd Polish Division near Rocca Cinquemiglia on the upper Sangro River: some Polish units were placed north of 4th Indian Division, and part of 10th Indian Division was said to be near Villa Grande (off the Adriatic coast). Observers in the many excellent German observation posts noticed that there was much movement of transport on *AOK 10's* front but no deductions were apparently made. The activities of the Allied artillery and patrols seemed quite normal. British and American signal security was excellent, but as late as the morning of 11th May Kesselring drew von Vietinghoff's attention to recent intercepts. These showed that the Allies had held an exercise which included landing an armoured division near Pozzuoli where, Kesselring pointed out, the terrain was very like that between Gaeta and Terracina. This information, of course, was part of that which the Allies' deception plan intended to convey. On 8th May Hartmann believed that only two Allied divisions faced his right wing besides two in the Cassino area. On 10th May Wentzell agreed with Beelitz (Kesselring's Operations Officer, and at this time his Deputy Chief of Staff, as Westphal was on sick leave until 18th May) that it was impossible to predict the Allies' actions as so many choices were open to them. Wentzell plumped for Rome as the most rewarding objective for them but remarked cautiously that 'all sorts of things may be happening without our knowledge.' As he told Beelitz at 11 a.m. on 11th May that 'nothing special is happening here' the German Intelligence staffs were floundering till the last minute. It is however interesting that on 10th May Feuerstein told von Vietinghoff that the Allied forces which faced Ortner's sector were much stronger than Ortner's gaggle of units which was unlikely to be able to withstand a determined onslaught.[24] Feuerstein advised an early withdrawal from Cassino town and Mt Cassino to the Hitler Line, arguing that this course would enable him to avoid high casualties, and to create local reserves because the Hitler Line was more economical in troops than the Cassino positions. von Vietinghoff did not accept his advice.

Digitized by Google

(iii)

See Map 7

Kirkman's 13th Corps was 8th Army's main striking force, but before it could begin thrusting along the Liri valley it had to carry out a hazardous operation.[25] This was to force a crossing over the River Gari, which was about sixty feet wide and six or more feet deep, flowing at seven knots between steep and soft banks with flood banks from three to seven feet high. The German defences on the west bank were highly organized and very strong, consisting of well dug strongpoints and some pillboxes, all connected by trenches, and all well mined and wired. Nevertheless the defences between the River Liri and Cassino town had very little depth. Strong as they were, they were a shallow belt behind which there were no prepared positions for reserves. The next prepared defences were those of the Hitler Line between Aquino and Pontecorvo some 14,000 yards to the west. The want of depth in the defences was matched by the lack of local mobile reserves. The Germans enjoyed excellent observation of the river and the ground on either side from viewpoints on Mt Cassino and the northern spurs of the Aurunci mountains. On the east bank of the river cover was provided by various features of the ground and by the remains of woods and orchards, copses, scrub, untended crops, and woods. The region had been well cultivated before it had been blighted by war.

An opposed river crossing requires special equipment and methods. In 1944 typical British equipment included assault boats, rafts of various kinds, and bridges of folding boat, pontoon, and Bailey types.[26] All were carried in vehicles and were cumbersome and awkward to handle. Assault boats were collapsible, not bullet-proof, and held from seven to nine men. Paddles propelled the boats but, in unskilled hands, in circles and zigzags as likely as not. It was preferable to pass a cable to the far bank by boat or swimmer, make it fast, and haul boats and rafts to and fro along it. Boating and light rafting were tasks for all arms, but the engineers were responsible for bridging and heavy rafting.

Bridges will almost certainly have been destroyed and so a principal object is to build new ones: first and as quickly as possible, light rafts and bridges which are quite strong enough to carry light anti-tank guns across the river to give the infantry some protection

Digitized by Google

until the heavier guns and tanks can cross on larger rafts and bridges, which take longer to build.*

Careful reconnaissance is needed of the approaches to the near bank of the river and the exits on the far side; of the height, gradient, and composition of both banks: and of the river's current, depth and bottom. Such reconnaissance is laborious, dangerous and can alert the enemy.

The limiting factor is usually the approaches which decide whether a bridging site is practical or not. The heavily laden bridging vehicles must be able to get there in the first place, and the traffic, which will eventually flow over it, must be able to cross without bogging down in the approaches and exits. Such sites are, as a rule, few and obvious. In consequence there is little hope of tactical surprise and the first crossings by assault boat and raft are almost always under fire. The initial aims of the crossing are to clear the proposed bridge sites of direct small-arms fire and, ideally, from observed artillery and mortar fire as well, and to give the infantry a defensible bridgehead. For every reason a successful opposed river crossing demands courage, skill, careful preparation, and a measure of luck. Kirkman was fortunate to have three first-rate infantry divisions in his Corps. He chose 4th Division (Ward) and 8th Indian Division (Russell) to make the assault crossing of the Gari. Ward, fighting his first battle as a Divisional Commander, was a very experienced brigadier who had commanded 17th Infantry Brigade in 5th Division's crossing of the Garigliano in January. Russell had been in the field since the brave days of Keren, Amba Alagi, and the Western Desert. Dogged, thorough, wary, and cool, he was a splendid Divisional Commander. His division had the crossing of the Sangro behind it, and was moreover trained in amphibious operations.

Although Leese's original plan had been for simultaneous attacks by the Polish Corps and 13th Corps, detailed planning showed that it was preferable to stagger the attacks slightly.[28] The timings were:

---

* The raft and bridging equipment in use in Italy was:[27]

Type	*Load Class*	*Typical load*
Assault Boat Rafts	2	6-pdr a/tk guns; Jeeps.
Folding Boat Rafts and Bridges	5 and 9	17-pdr a/tk guns; carriers; up to 3-ton trucks.
Bailey Rafts and Bridges	30 to 70 depending on construction	Tanks and all other military traffic.

The Load Class depended upon the axle loading of each vehicle but as an approximation it equated to total weight in tons.

Digitized by Google

11th May 11 a.m.	Beginning of artillery programme.
12.45 p.m.	4th Division and 8th Indian Division launch assault boats.
12th May 1 a.m.	Polish Corps begins its attacks.

Because 13th Corps was the main striking force and was to attack before the Poles we will first describe its plans down to the divisional level.

Kirkman intended 'to attack the enemy in the Liri valley with the object of establishing a bridgehead over the Rapido (Gari) river as a preliminary to the isolation and mopping up of the enemy in the Cassino area and a general advance up the valley.' There were four important natural features which affected his plan of attack. The first of these was the steep Mt Trocchio (Pt 428) which was on the home bank, within his own Corps area. This feature, some two miles in length from north to south, though an invaluable observation post for artillery, restricted the routes of advance towards the Gari and forced him to approach that river with his assaulting formations either from its northern or southern end. There was only just enough room for one division to assemble and deploy to the north of Mt Trocchio astride Highway 6, although two could have been deployed to the south.

The second feature was Mt Cassino which gave the Germans magnificent observation over the Liri valley. The further away from it the assault could be made the better, suggesting that an assault round the northern end of Mt Trocchio should be avoided. This view was reinforced by the third feature which was a series of hillocks, within the German defences on the west side of the Gari, which formed a horseshoe-shaped locality with its two heels at S. Angelo on the right and Panaccioni on the left and with its toe at Pignataro. This horseshoe, strongly defended by the enemy, appeared to be an objective which could be best assailed by deploying from the south of Mt Trocchio. Nevertheless the fourth feature argued in the opposite sense. This was the position of the practical bridge sites, where there were tracks down to the river which could carry tanks and other fighting vehicles. About half of these lay towards the northern end. Taking account of these considerations Kirkman decided to assault across the Gari with two divisions, 4th Division from the north of Mt Trocchio, and 8th Indian Division from the south of it and against the 'Horseshoe'.

78th Division, in reserve, was to be ready to operate on the south flank of 8th Indian Division, or to pass through it or through 4th

Digitized by Google

Division.[29] The timing of the attack was suggested by the matter of moonlight. The moon had been full on 8th May and rose at 11.31 p.m. on the night of 11th/12th May. If the attack began at 11.45 p.m. the infantry would be able to form up in darkness, but there would be moonlight later to help the crossing, and the bridge building.

The tasks of the assault Divisions fell into three phases:

Phase	4th Division	8th Indian Division
I.	To make a bridgehead between exclusive Cassino railway station and exclusive S. Angelo.	To make a bridgehead at, and south of S. Angelo.
II.	To enlarge the bridgehead up to the road Cassino–Pignataro.	To enlarge the bridgehead by seizing the 'Horseshoe' and the 'Liri Appendix' i.e. the piece of ground in the convergence of the Gari and Liri rivers.
III.	To exploit westwards to the line Ponte a Cavallo–Massa Pinchera; to make contact with the Poles on Highway 6 about two miles west of Cassino town	To advance to Pignataro, and then to exploit towards the Hitler Line.

The Corps' programme of artillery support conformed to the Army plan.[30] Every gun was to be employed in counter-battery and counter-mortar bombardment from 11 p.m. until 11.40 p.m. The German guns and *nebelwerfer* were to be engaged by the medium and heavy artillery, and the mortars by the field and heavy A.A. guns. The aim was to produce a concentration of between 14 and 18 to 1, and it was possible to deliver seven tons of shells simultaneously on one target. At the end of the counter-battery programme 17 field and two medium regiments reverted to control of 13th Corps and creeping barrages and concentrations were arranged for 4th and 8th Indian Divisions. The rate of advance of the barrages was one hundred yards in six minutes. Besides the artillery devoted to supporting the infantry, about 114 medium and heavy guns were available for counter-battery tasks.*

* The amount of shell dumped for the artillery supporting 13th Corps was in r.p.g.:

Heavy	200
Medium	350
Field	600

The guns and howitzers available for the latter counter-battery programme were:[31]

4.5-inch	72
155-mm and 8-inch	24
24-mm	2
3.7-inch H.A.A.	16

Digitized by Google

Bridges were an essential for 8th Army's plan of advance, and the following were to be built to begin with:[32]

Sector	Name	Site
4th Division	Amazon (Class 40)	1½ miles south of Cassino railway station.
	Blackwater (Class 9)	1 mile south of Amazon.
	Congo (Class 30)	½ mile south of Blackwater.
8th Indian Division	Cardiff (Class 30)	500 yards north of S. Angelo.
	London (Class 40)	At S. Angelo.
	Oxford (Class 40)	About a mile south of London.
	Plymouth (Class 30)	About 1,000 yards south of Oxford.

These bridges were to be built at the earliest possible moment, and the class of any bridge might be raised as circumstances might require.[33] Roads and tracks were as important as bridges, and here a disadvantage was that the alignments of tracks west of the Gari could be planned only by observation from high ground and from the study of air photographs. 4th Division was given Highway 6 as its axis and a special group of South African engineer units known as the Cassino Task Force was detailed to clear and repair this road where it lay under the rubble of the devastated town.* 8th Indian Division's centre line was to be S. Angelo–Pignataro–Pontecorvo.

Several tracks were to be made and camouflaged leading to the sites of the bridges from the assembly areas of the assaulting divisions. The main tracks and their related bridges were from north to south:

Joker (Amazon)
Trump (Blackwater)
Ace (Congo)
Spade (Cardiff)
London (London)
Heart (Oxford)
Diamond (Plymouth)

When the bridgehead had been made these tracks would be pushed westwards across country by the divisional engineers. No matter what success was gained by the Polish Corps on the right and the F.E.C. on the left, 13th Corps' bridge sites would have to be screened with smoke. From first light on 12th May smoke generators were to be used at the bridge sites and the artillery was to maintain a continuous bombardment of the north-western and south-western slopes of Monastery Hill with smoke shell to blind the German artillery observers.†[34]

* South African Engineer Corps: Nos 1st, 11th, 13th Field Companies; 22nd Field Park Company; 25th, 27th, 31st Road Construction Companies; 82nd Workshop and Park Company.

† In the event some 135,000 smoke shells were fired in five days by the divisional artilleries of 3rd Carpathian Division and 4th Division, and by the 7.2-inch, 8-inch and 240-mm howitzers: say about 800 tons of smoke.

Digitized by Google

A tremendous effort was made to conceal the many preparations.[35] It was necessary to forbid any attempt to patrol west of the Gari for fear that tell-tale identifications might be made from corpses or captives. Reconnaissance could be made only from Mt Trocchio and other high ground. Units moved to or from assembly areas by night, and dummies were always left in training areas to simulate fighting vehicles and transport which had moved forward so that no noticeable changes might appear. Guns moved into position by night and were carefully camouflaged. Dumps of all natures were formed by night under what natural cover could be found, and improved by camouflage. Work on tracks was done by night and concealed with brushwood. Assault boats were hidden in ditches near the river bank by night. In short all the measures of concealment which ingenuity could devise were adopted.

Major-General Ward, commander of 4th Division, called his first planning conference on 21st April.*

On the west bank of the Gari, facing the division, the fields were level except where broken by banks and hillocks. The Pioppeto stream, which flowed into the Gari, split the division's front and there were many drainage ditches as well which were thought to be tank obstacles.[37] The assault was to be delivered by two brigades: on the right 10th (Shoosmith) north of the Pioppeto; on the left 28th (Scott) south of it. The crossing places on the Rapido were from north to south:

---

* *4th Division. Outline Order of Battle*[36]

10th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier S. N. Shoosmith):
2nd Battalion Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment, 1st/6th Battalion East Surrey Regiment, 2nd Battalion The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

12th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier A. G. W. Heber-Percy):
2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers, 6th Battalion Black Watch, 1st Battalion Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.

28th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier C. A. M. D. Scott):
2nd Battalion The King's Liverpool Regiment, 2nd Battalion Somerset Light Infantry, 2nd/4th Battalion Hampshire Regiment.

R.A.C. 4th Reconnaissance Regiment.

R.A. 22nd, 30th, 77th Field Regiments; 14th A/Tk Regiment; 91st L.A.A. Regiment.

R.E. 7th, 59th, 225th Field Companies; 18th Field Park Company.

M.G. 2nd Battalion Royal Northumberland Fusiliers.

Additional Troops

26th Armoured Brigade (Brigadier F. N. Mitchell) (less 16th/5th Lancers, and 10th Rifle Brigade): 17th/21st Lancers, 2nd Lothians and Border Horse; 12th Regiment R.H.A.

1st Guards Brigade (Brigadier J. C. Haydon): 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards, 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards, 3rd Battalion Welsh Guards, 18th New Zealand Armoured Regiment (less two squadrons).

R.A. 2nd Regiment R.H.A., 17th Field Regiment, 142nd Army Field Regiment, Battery 165th Army Field Regiment. 1st and 2nd Field Regiments R.C.A. 75th and 78th Medium Regiments; 4th/9th Battery 2nd Medium Regiment. 300th and 504th Batteries 75th Heavy Regiment.

U.S. A and C Batteries 995th Artillery Battalion (8-inch howitzers).

Digitized by Google

10th Infantry Brigade

'Rhine' Where the Ascensione stream meets the Gari.

'Orinoco' Six hundred yards downstream from 'Rhine'.

28th Infantry Brigade

'X' Five hundred and fifty yards downstream from 'Orinoco'.

'Y' Two hundred and fifty yards downstream from 'X'.

12th Infantry Brigade (Heber-Percy) was to be ready to cross by 'Rhine' and 'Orinoco', pass through 10th Brigade and attack north-west towards Highway 6. Each assaulting brigade was to set up three ferries (cable and raft) near the crossing places; 225th Field Company was to build Amazon bridge between 'Rhine' and 'Orinoco'; 59th Field Company was to build Blackwater bridge a little south of 'Y' crossing; and 7th Field Company was to build Congo bridge some three hundred yards downstream from Blackwater. The Division's objectives were given as four lines:

Brown	The Cassino–S. Angelo road about one thousand yards west of the Gari.
Blue	Some ridges and hillocks about a thousand yards west of Brown.
Red	Two thousand yards west of Blue.
Green	Fifteen hundred yards west of Red.

Ward hoped to reach Blue by 3.30 a.m. on 12th May. The advance from Blue to Red would not be begun at least until Amazon bridge had been built and a squadron of 17th/21st Lancers and some anti-tank guns had joined the leading brigades. The main artillery support was to take the form of a creeping barrage. 1st Guards Brigade, in Cassino town, was to engage the enemy there, and to protect the division's right flank.

The Division was given 72 assault boats, 14 rafts, and two sets, each of 130 feet, of Bailey bridging.

Major-General Russell, commander of 8th Division, issued his first 'Planning Notes' on 18th April and the last of a series of six on 8th May.* During this period there was ample time to settle every

---

* *8th Indian Division. Outline Order of Battle*[33]

17th Indian Infantry Brigade (Brigadier C. H. Boucher):
1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers, 1st Battalion 12th Frontier Force Regiment, 1st Battalion 5th Gurkha Rifles F.F.

19th Indian Infantry Brigade (Brigadier T. S. Dobree):
1st Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 3rd Battalion 8th Punjab Regiment, 6th Royal Battalion 13th Frontier Force Rifles.

21st Indian Infantry Brigade (Brigadier B. S. Mould):
5th Battalion Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, 1st Battalion 5th Mahratta Light Infantry, 3rd Battalion 15th Punjab Regiment.

I.A.C. 6th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers.

R.A. and I.A. 3rd, 52nd, 53rd Field Regiments R.A.; 5th Mahratta A/Tk Regiment I.A.; 26th L.A.A. Regiment R.A.

I.E. 7th, 66th, 69th Field Companies, 47th Field Park Company, Bengal S. and M.

M.G. M.G. Battalion 5th Mahratta Light Infantry.

Continued opposite

Digitized by Google

detail and a divisional report, issued on 30th July, remarked with justice, 'No one seemed to be rushed and everyone knew exactly what was required of him'.[39] This statement is confirmed by officers who took part in the first crossings. They have said that the preparations were so thorough that the possibility of failure did not enter their heads.

The ground west of the Gari presented no very prominent features.[40] No aggressive infantry patrolling was permitted on the west bank for fear of prejudicing surprise, but early in May two Pathan non-commissioned officers of 6th/13th Frontier Force Rifles, stripped and unarmed, swam the river at night and made a hasty and very dangerous reconnaissance. They reported a belt of wire near the bank, and trip-wires and booby traps. For the rest, knowledge of the ground could be gained only by studying air photographs and by observation from viewpoints on the home side of the river. Towards the right of the Division's front the ruins of the village of S. Angelo stood on a knoll and were clearly a strongpoint. A road ran southwards from the village along a low ridge and this ridge was certainly held. A general view was of a river fringed with water-meadows, about four hundred yards deep, covered with knee-high grass and intersected by drainage ditches. Within the S. Angelo 'Horseshoe' the ground sloped quite sharply upwards towards Pignataro in the west in a series of ridges and the whole of this area was covered by tall untended crops and scrub and dotted with fig and walnut trees and farm buildings.

Russell planned his attack in three phases:

First	To cross the river
Second	To secure the bridgehead
Third	To capture the S. Angelo 'Horseshoe'.

The assault was to be made by 17th Indian Infantry Brigade on the right and 19th Indian Infantry Brigade on the left. 21st Indian Infantry Brigade was in reserve and had various tasks which would depend upon the progress of the battle. The most important were to help in the capture of the S. Angelo 'Horseshoe', or, if help was not necessary, to exploit westwards from Pignataro.

Each of the assault brigades had two crossing-places and, because no strongly marked natural features existed, two considerations

---

Additional Troops:
1st Canadian Armoured Brigade (Brigadier W. C. Murphy):
11th Armoured Regiment (The Ontairo Regiment), 12th Armoured Regiment (Three Rivers Regiment), 14th Armoured Regiment (The Calgary Regiment).
R.A. 98th Field Regiment (S.P.), 152nd Field Regiment, 165th Army Field Regiment less one battery, 11th Army Field Regiment R.C.A.

Besides the above additional artillery units, 8th Indian Division had a call on the fire of two field and two medium regiments, two heavy batteries, and three troops of heavy A.A. guns in the ground role.

Digitized by Google

governed the choice of sites. Places were looked for where the German forward defended localities were far enough from the river's bank to be bombarded without risk of hitting the troops who were crossing the river. The second consideration was to find places which satisfied the first and where in addition tracks of some sort ran close to the river. The crossing-places which were chosen were indicated by map references but we mark them by letters:

17th Indian Infantry Brigade:

'A' Right. About eight hundred yards upstream of S. Angelo.
'B' Left. About nine hundred yards downstream of S. Angelo.

There was a gap of about seven hundred yards between B and

19th Indian Infantry Brigade:

'C' Right. Roughly opposite Casali.
'D' Left. Roughly opposite Panaccioni.

Objectives which were quite close to the western bank of the river were given to both brigades and this shallow bridgehead was to be extended to a depth of about fourteen hundred yards from the western bank during the second phase. The supporting artillery amounted to ten field regiments, two medium regiments, two heavy batteries, and three troops of heavy A.A. guns in the ground role. These were to fire a barrage and timed concentrations. Bridging was to begin at the first possible moment.[41] 7th Field Company Bengal S. and M. was responsible for Cardiff; 577th Field Company R.E. (Corps troops) for London; 66th Field Company Bengal S. and M. for Oxford; and 69th Field Company Bengal S. and M. for Plymouth. For Plymouth a very novel method of bridging was devised by Captain H. A. Kingsmill, Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and put into practice by 69th Field Company. The turret was removed from a Sherman tank of the Calgary Regiment, and a Bailey bridge which had been previously built was placed on rollers fixed on top of the tank's hull. A second tank was attached to the rear end of the bridge as a pusher. When all was ready the tanks moved off together to a point where the river bank had been ramped. The first tank slid down the ramp into the river bed thus forming a pier, while the second tank pushed the bridge forward on its rollers until the nose reached the far bank. The driver of the first tank escaped as it submerged, and needed to be cool-headed as well as very brave if he were not to drown.* 8th Indian Division was given 120 assault boats, 14 rafts, and two sets of Bailey bridging with additional sets, as required, from Corps' reserve.

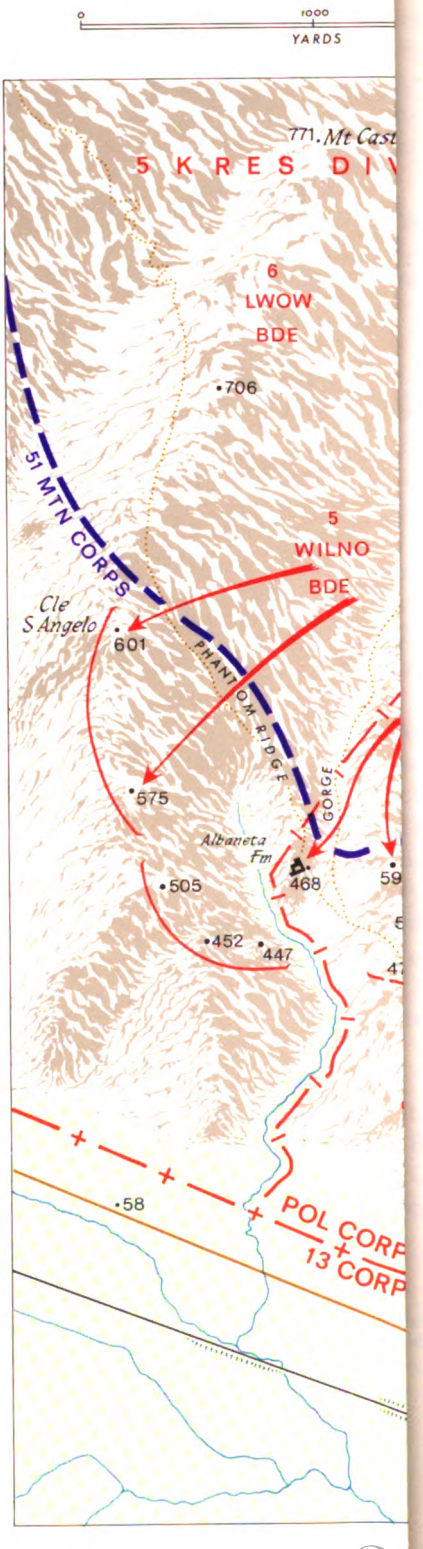
* In the event Captain Kingsmill conducted the launching of Plymouth, walking beside the first tank and guiding the driver by a telephone. He was wounded by a shell but continued with his dangerous task, which won for him the M.C.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Map 8

DIADEM: POLISH CO



Digitized by Google

See Map 8

The field of battle for the Polish Corps lay between Mt Castellone (Pt 771) and Mt Cassino (Pt 516), usually known as Monastery Hill, upon which lay the ruins of the great Benedictine Abbey. M Cassino was about two and a half miles away from Mt Castellone as the crow flies, and the battlefield covered little more than six square miles, but those six square miles were a crumpled conglomeration of bare stone-strewn hillsides, jagged rock outcrops and steep ravines, in which false crests abounded and the divergence between maps and reality makes it difficult to describe actions accurately. The ground is simplest to visualise as two parallel ridges running southwards from Mt Castellone (Pt 771) and from Colle Majola (Pt 481), separated by a steepish valley tapering into a gorge at the southern end of which stood the ruined buildings of Albaneta Farm on a small plateau (Pt 468). The German defences had congealed during the earlier fighting into mutually supporting groups of defensive posts on the southern end of both ridges. On the western ridge the German forward positions lay on a spur known as the Phantom Ridge, which ran south-eastwards towards Albaneta Farm, with supporting positions constructed in depth on the main ridge from Colle S. Angelo southwards through Points 575, 505, 452 and 447. On the eastern ridge the German forward posts were in amongst the tangled rock outcrops around Pt 593 (known in earlier fighting as the Snake's Head Ridge) and the D'Onifrio Ridge. These were supported by a complex of posts guarding the approaches to the Monastery. It is important to realise that all these posts were mutually supporting and that arcs of fire were interlocked to cover the hill sides between the two main ridges. Earlier attacks had shown that it was difficult to make progress on one without subduing the other.

There were two general approaches for attacking troops: direct up the steep slopes of Mt Cassino itself from the Rapido valley and Cassino town, which had been tried by the Gurkhas, or down the two ridges from the north. To use the word 'approach' is misleading because it suggests ground which was fairly easy to cross. In reality it was horrible everywhere, being unspeakably rough and broken, with ridges, knolls, and hollows jumbled together. At one point deep clefts might be the obstacle, at another sheer rock faces or steep slabs, or all three might be found in hopeless confusion in the space of a few acres. Huge boulders were scattered about; here and there were patches of scrub; and the gorges were often choked with innocent-looking but savage thorn which was almost impossible to push through. The ground set terrible puzzles to attacking troops. This or that knoll or ridge might seem to be a promising objective but would turn out to be commanded from an unlikely direction

Digitized by Google

by another knoll or ridge or by several. A line of approach might look practicable and would turn out to be blocked by some impassable obstacle. The advantages of the ground lay wholly with defending troops who, for good measure, enjoyed almost perfect observation from Monastery Hill, S. Angelo hill, Mt Castellone, Mt Cairo, and other viewpoints.

On 24th March Anders was told that his Corps would have the task of attacking Monastery Hill. He flew over the area, and also made as careful reconnaissances as were possible from the bullet and shell-swept Allied positions on the slopes of Mt Castellone, and Colle Majola, and the D'Onifrio ridge (Pt 450).[42] He also collected every scrap of relevant information from those who had fought the earlier battles of Mt Cassino, particularly from 4th Indian Division. He produced an outline plan on 8th April and his Divisional Commanders, Duch and Sulik, were then able to study the ground and make their plans.* Anders held his final co-ordinating conference on 25th April. About seven German battalions were thought to hold the area, although the battalions of 1st Parachute Division were believed to be very much weakened by the earlier battles. It was thought that the German artillery could bring 230 guns at most to bear on the area and 130 at the least, and they had a great many mortars and *nebelwerfer*. Their field defences had been very much improved and consisted of a linked and mutually supporting system of foxholes, sangars, bunkers, and pillboxes in steel or concrete; wire and anti-personnel mines.

---

* *Polish Corps (Lieutenant-General W. Anders) Outline Order of Battle*[43]

Corps Troops

Carpathian Lancers (Reconnaissance Unit): Army Group, Polish Artillery: 7th Polish Horse Artillery Regiment, 9th Polish Field Regiment, 10th and 11th Polish Medium Regiments.

3rd Carpathian Division (Major-General Duch)

1st Carpathian Rifle Brigade (Colonel Peszek): 1st, 2nd, 3rd Carpathian Rifle Battalions. 2nd Carpathian Rifle Brigade (Lieutenant-Colonel Szynanski): 4th, 5th, 6th Carpathian Rifle Battalions.
And
12th Podolski Reconnaissance Regiment; 1st, 2nd, 3rd Carpathian Field Regiments, A/Tk and L.A.A. Regiments; 1st, 2nd, 3rd Carpathian Field Companies, Field Park Company; 3rd Carpathian M.G. Battalion.

5th Kresowa Division (Major-General Sulik)

5th Wilenska Infantry Brigade (Colonel Kurek):
13th, 14th, 15th Wilenska Rifle Battalions.
6th Lwowska Infantry Brigade (Colonel Sawicki):
16th, 17th, 18th Lwowska Rifle Battalions.
And
15th Poznanski Reconnaissance Regiment; 4th, 5th, 6th Kresowa Field Regiments, A/Tk and L.A.A. Regiments; 4th, 5th, 6th Kresowa Field Companies, Field Park Company; 5th Kresowa M.G. Battalion.

2nd Polish Armoured Brigade (Major-General Rakowski);

1st Polish Armoured Cavalry Regiment, 4th Polish Armoured Regiment, 6th Lwowska Armoured Regiment.

Digitized by Google

Anders examined and dismissed the possibility of scaling the bare and excessively steep southern and eastern slopes of Monastery Hill. He dismissed also any idea of attacking the Abbey and the saddle from the D'Onifrio Ridge because 4th Indian Division declared the great gorges, which had to be crossed, to be impassable because of the appalling ground swept by cross-fire and the dense scrub. He decided that there were four dominating points or 'natural' objectives, from right to left the S. Angelo hill, Pt 575, Pt 593, and the Abbey, and he decided to attack the two main ridges on the axis Colle Majola–Albaneta Farm. The advantages, if advantages could be said to exist at all, of this approach were that there was less climbing, that the forming-up places were more or less protected by the existing forward positions, and that three of the objectives might be attacked almost simultaneously, thus neutralising to some extent the German advantage of the close mutual support of their defences.

Anders placed the 5th Kresowa Division on the right and 3rd Carpathian Division on the left.[44] 5th Kresowa Division's objectives were the S. Angelo hill, Pt 575, and three other knolls about eight hundred yards south and south-east of Pt 575, namely Pts 505, 452 and 447. 3rd Carpathian Division's objectives were Albaneta Farm and Pt 593, and then, in a second phase, the Abbey. Both divisions were to attack at 1 a.m. on 12th May but the 5th Kresowa Division was not to pass beyond an intermediate objective on Phantom Ridge until its left flank had been secured from enfilading fire by 3rd Carpathian Division's capture of Albaneta Farm and Pt 593. With the addition of 4th New Zealand Field Regiment, of 140th Medium Regiment R.A., and of a battery of 102nd Medium Regiment R.A., Anders disposed of about 216 25-pdrs and 56 medium guns. He arranged a flexible allotment of these guns so that at the periods of greatest need 5th Kresowa Division could count on 128 25-pdrs and 32 medium; 3rd Carpathian Division on 144 25-pdrs and 8 medium. By arrangement with H.Q. 13th Corps, 16 7.2-inch howitzers could be called upon for support.[45] The divisions were provided also with 72 4.2-inch mortars and 16 flame-throwers manned by the anti-tank regiments. Each division was allotted one squadron of tanks to be used at the discretion of General Rakowski. It was possible to think of using tanks because in February and March Indian and New Zealand engineers had built a track (Cavendish Road) leading from Cairo village over the Majola hill. The Polish engineers now improved this track and camouflaged its most exposed parts with hugh screens.

Anders' plan committed all the infantry of his two-brigade divisions, and left him without a reserve. He therefore withdrew an infantry battalion from 5th Kresowa Division, replacing it by

Digitized by Google

the Carpathian Lancers, dismounted from their vehicles, and arranged to withdraw a battalion from 3rd Carpathian Division after the capture of Albaneta Farm. The want of a proper reserve of infantry was unfortunate but could not be avoided if he was to secure all the mutually supporting features almost simultaneously.

The transport of ammunition, supplies, water, and stores from the railhead at Vairano to the Field Maintenance Area at Venafro presented no particular problem.[46] West of a line drawn through S. Elia–Portella–S. Michele it was another matter. Movement of vehicles, mules, and men from this line to Cairo village, and then to the forward positions was possible only during the night, and was dangerous even then. The Poles, like all their predecessors in the positions facing Cassino, had to master the frantic nightly scramble to bring the convoys across the Rapido valley, to turn them round, and send them away before dawn, to say nothing of distributing their contents.* Fortunately the Polish Corps had been allotted two R.A.S.C. Jeep-and-trailer platoons, with two more on a fortnight's loan, and had moreover been given five Cypriot Pack Transport Companies, and five Italian Labour Companies of which one could be used as porters. Because of the difficulties of transport abnormally large quantities of artillery ammunition had to be dumped: 1,090 r.p.g. for field artillery, and 700 r.p.g. for medium.[48]

The Polish troops relieved 78th Division between 24th and 27th April, without incident, thereafter to live in cramped immobility by day and in endless fatigue parties by night, on cold rations and four pints of water per man, per day, for all purposes. The historian of 78th Division has described the surroundings which his division was delighted to leave to the Poles:

> 'At some points the enemy was less than fifty yards from our front line, and any movement in daylight was greeted with a salvo of mortar bombs . . . In the forward sangars the only hot nourishment available was tea boiled over tommy cookers; rats abounded and, as the weather grew warmer, the air was heavy with the stench of corruption, and alive with flies'. (†)

---

* A typical night's supply for 380 men of 5th Northamptons on the Majola hill in April was:[47]

Water	400 gals	Tea	12 lbs
Bread	214 lbs	Margarine	36 ,,
Biscuit	54 ,,	Jam	36 ,,
Sugar	59 ,,	Cheese	23 ,,
Flour	36 ,,	Bully Beef	12 ,,
Rice	23 ,,	Salmon	21 ,,
Meat	177 ,,	Herring	21 ,,
Potatoes	285 ,,	Sardines	14 ,,
Vegetables	325 ,,	Dried Milk	59 ,,
		Rum	2 gals

† Cyril Ray, *Algiers to Austria* (London 1952) p. 118.
Fred Majdalany, *The Monastery* (1945) gives a graphic firsthand account of life on Mt Cassino.

Digitized by Google

(iv)

See Maps 2 and 4

General Juin's French Expeditionary Corps was strong and well equipped.[49] The four divisions numbered about 61,827 men and the Moroccan Goums about 10,000. Counting attached American artillery, the Corps had about 365 field guns and howitzers, including one regiment of 75-mm pack howitzers. The Corps included, in its 4th Moroccan Mountain Division and three Groups of Tabors of Moroccan Goums, what Juin described as a 'small Mountain Corps'. The Corps possessed eight companies of pack mules besides motor transport companies.*

Between 25th and 29th March Juin took over from 4th British Division (13th Corps) the bridgehead across the Garigliano from near Castelforte to the junction of the rivers Garigliano and Liri.[50]

---

* *French Expeditionary Corps. Outline Order of Battle*
Corps Troops
7th and 8th A/Tk Regiments (Chasseurs d'Afrique); Levant Artillery Regiment; Naval Gun Battalion; 64th African Artillery Regiment.
1st French Infantry Division (Major-General D. Brosset):
1st Infantry Brigade (Colonel Delange),
2nd Infantry Brigade (Lieutenant-Colonel Garbay),
4th Infantry Brigade (Colonel Raynal),
13th Demi Brigade (Major Bablon),
and
1st French Reconnaissance Regiment; 1st French Artillery Regiment; 1st French Engineer Battalion.
2nd Moroccan Infantry Division (Major-General A. W. Dody):
4th Moroccan Infantry Regiment (Colonel Bridot),
5th Moroccan Infantry Regiment (Colonel Piatte),
8th Moroccan Infantry Regiment (Colonel Molle),
and
3rd Moroccan Reconnaissance Regiment; 63rd African Artillery Regiment; three companies Engineers.
3rd Algerian Infantry Division (Major-General de Goislard de Monsabert):
3rd Algerian Infantry Regiment (Lieutenant-Colonel Gonzalez de Linares),
7th Algerian Infantry Regiment (Colonel Chappuis),
4th Tunisian Infantry Regiment (Colonel Guillebaud),
and
3rd Algerian Reconnaissance Regiment; 67th African Artillery Regiment, three companies Engineers.
4th Moroccan Mountain Division (Brigadier-General F. Sevez):
1st Moroccan Infantry Regiment (Colonel Brissaud-Desmaillet),
2nd Moroccan Infantry Regiment (Colonel Buot de l'Epine),
6th Moroccan Infantry Regiment (Colonel Cherrière),
and
4th Moroccan Reconnaissance Regiment; 69th African Artillery Regiment; three companies Engineers.
Moroccan Goums (Brigadier-General A. Guillaume):
1st Group of Tabors (Colonel Leblanc): 2nd, 3rd, 12th Tabors,
3rd Group of Tabors (Colonel Massiet du Biest): 9th, 10th, 17th Tabors,
4th Group of Tabors (Lieutenant-Colonel Soulard later Colonel Gautier): 5th, 8th, 11th Tabors.
U.S. Units attached: Several units were attached for varying periods and included tanks, artillery, and engineers. The most important were:
34th A.A. Brigade; 753rd, 755th, 756th, 757th Tank Battalions; Field Artillery Battalions: 17th, 178th, 248th, 933rd (155-mm howitzers); 630th, 995th, (8-inch howitzers), 633rd, 985th (155-mm guns), 698th (240-mm howitzers), 939th (4.5-inch guns).

Digitized by Google

Clark gave him no precise orders but exchanged general ideas. Juin lost no time in picking the brains of McCreery, Commander of 10th Corps, and made with him a careful reconnaissance of the F.E.C's new sector. Apart from knowing that the Allies were to launch an offensive Juin at this time knew nothing of the plans of Alexander, Clark, and Leese because, as a simple Corps Commander, he had not attended Alexander's conference for Army Commanders on 28th February nor, in the future, would he attend Alexander's conferences on 2nd April and 1st May. He assumed however that 5th Army's task would be to reach as quickly as possible the important lateral road Formia–Itri–Pico. Thereafter the Army would press towards Rome in order to link up with 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio, and would also strike towards Frosinone to choke (*'asphyxier'*) the German defences in the Liri valley and so help 8th Army's offensive on the axis of Highway 6.[51]

Juin saw that on his front there was only one 'through' route which pierced the masses of the Aurunci and Ausoni mountains and led towards Rome.[52] It ran through Esperia–Pontecorvo–Pico–Ceccano–Gavignano. On the other hand there were several lateral routes, namely:

Minturno–Ausonia–S. Giorgio.
Formia–Itri–Pico–Arce.
Fondi–Castro dei Volsci–Pofi.
Priverno–Ceccano–Frosinone.

Consideration of the 'through' and the lateral routes suggested that it was essential to seize the road junctions at Ausonia, Pico, Castro dei Volsci, and Ceccano in order to advance towards Rome on the south side of the Liri and Sacco valley. But before any advance was possible the formidable barrier of the Aurunci mountains would have to be seized, the key points in which were the massifs of Mt Majo (Pt 940) and Mt Petrella (Pt 1,535). Whoever seized these would become master of the German system of defences which faced the F.E.C. Juin believed that in his Mountain Corps and 2nd Moroccan and 3rd Algerian Divisions he had troops capable of seizing the mountains, and in his 1st French Infantry Division troops capable of mastering the lower ground. The outline of his plan for the F.E.C. therefore is shown in *Map 5*. The Corps would operate on the general axis Mt Fuga–Pico, keeping touch with 13th Corps on the right, and with 2nd U.S. Corps on the left. It would seize the massif of Mt Majo, would cut the Ausonia–S. Giorgio lateral as far north as possible and would extend the Garigliano bridgehead to this road. Thereafter the F.E.C. would reach the Itri–Pico–Arce lateral by the shortest route, opening the road Esperia–Pico and so permitting it to concentrate in the

Digitized by Google

neighbourhood of Pico with a view to taking Arce or Frosinone in rear. He ordered his staff to prepare a plan on these lines.

On 1st April Brigadier-General Brann, head of 5th Army's Operations Staff, visited Juin and gave him an early version of Clark's plan which we have described in its final form in Section (i) of this chapter, and a sketch of 8th Army's plan.[53] In the early version of Clark's plan the task of the F.E.C. was to capture successively Mt Majo, Ausonia, and S. Ambrogio, and then Esperia and Mt d'Oro. After that 2nd U.S. Corps would pass through and exploit towards Pico and Mt Leucio. Juin was greatly upset. His impression was that the F.E.C. would be employed only to break into the Gustav Line and then to protect 8th Army's left flank, while that Army and the remainder of 5th Army marched on Rome. He protested to Brann and when his own Staff study was ready on 4th April, he sent a copy to Clark. After some discussion Clark and Alexander accepted his general ideas, and Juin went on to plan his operations in detail, issuing his final orders on 7th May.

Juin's final plan was a classic expression of the French doctrine of mountain warfare. His method was to infiltrate on many lines at once, seizing first the high and dominating features and then the lower ground. He divided his operations into phases but these were to be flexible. There would be no need to complete a phase or even part of a phase before beginning others. '*Le rythme de la manoeuvre*', he wrote, '*sera adapté aux circonstances ce qui nécessitera de tous ardeur, compréhension et souplesse.*'[54]

The manoeuvre of the French Expeditionary Corps would take the following shape in four phases of which we need mention only three at this point.[55]

Phase I First to capture the group of mountains consisting of Mts Faito, Girofano, Feuci, Majo, and Colle Agrifoglio, and then to exploit quickly in a north-westerly direction on two axes. The first would be Mt Majo to Colle Castellone and would include actions against the flanks of German positions at Coreno and Ausonia. The second would be Colle Agrifoglio–Mt Paolino–Colle Cantalupo, and would be accompanied by the clearing of the terrain within the loop formed by the Garigliano and Liri rivers.

Phase II This could be begun as early as Phase I would allow and could be carried on without waiting for that phase to end. The first task was to capture the ridge running southward from Mt Feuci to Colle Reale. The next was to move in two directions: north-westward towards Coreno and Ausonia to block the valley of the River Ausente; and westward towards Mt Petrella with a view to sending the Mountain Corps into the Aurunci mountains west of the Ausente valley. While these moves were going on, Castelforte would be cleared.

Digitized by Google

In short the object of the two phases would be to gain possession of the terrain within the wide area marked by S. Ambrogio–Colle Cantalupo–Mt Calvo (Pt 637)–Ausonia–Mt Fammera–Mt Chiavica –Ravegrande.

Phase III The Mountain Corps would push westward to Mt Revole in order to strike at the rear of the defences at Esperia, Mt d'Oro, and towards Pico. At the same time a force would push along the axis Ausonia–Esperia. At the end of this phase the F.E.C. would have gained the terrain within the line S. Giorgio–Mt Maria–Mt del Lago–Mt Revole.

Juin's orders dated 7th May covered only the first two phases.[56] He placed 1st French Infantry Division on the right, 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division in the centre, the Mountain Corps on the left, and held 3rd Algerian Infantry Division in reserve on the left rear of the Mountain Corps.

In Phase I 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division would have the leading part: to capture Mt Faito, Mt Girofano, then Mt Feuci, Mt Majo, and Colle Agrifoglio. 4th Moroccan Mountain Division, in touch with the left of 2nd Moroccan Division, would take a jumping-off place on Mt Feuci for an attack southward against Colle Ceschito. 1st French Infantry Division, in touch with the right of the 2nd Moroccan Division, would establish itself on the high ground which overlooked S. Andrea from the south.

These operations formed the first part of Phase I. The next part, exploitation north-westward, would be accompanied by operations belonging to Phase II. The tasks of the divisions were as follows. 2nd Moroccan Division would move quickly along the heights from Mt Majo to Colle Castellone, taking in flank the German positions at Coreno and in the Ausonia defile. The division would also move quickly along the heights from Colle Agrifoglio to Colle Cantalupo, clearing the Vallemaio area en route. 4th Moroccan Mountain Division would attack south from Mt Feuci to capture Colle Ceschito, Colle Reale, and the western half of Colle Siola which was still in German hands. 1st French Infantry Division would advance northwards towards S. Andrea, Colle la Guardia, S. Ambrogio, and S. Appollinare and clear the terrain within the Garigliano–Liri loop.

The next series of operations belonged entirely to Phase II. 2nd Moroccan Division would continue to exploit, and 1st French Infantry Division would clear up the Garigliano loop. As soon as 4th Moroccan Mountain Division had taken Colle Ceschito and Colle Reale, 3rd Algerian Infantry Division, headed by an armoured group, would strike northward at Castelforte, and then, still northward, along the track to Coreno, and thence to Ausonia, helped by part of 4th Moroccan Mountain Division which was to break away

Digitized by Google

westwards, followed by most of the Mountain Corps, into the Aurunci mountains in the direction of Mt Petrella.

The description of the F.E.C.'s operations in phases and the setting out of the tasks of divisions in sequence disguises the elasticity of Juin's plans and of the tactics used in the Corps. The first duty of every commander was to use his utmost initiative and drive to win dominating ground, and then (in General de Monsabert's words) '*Exploiter à outrance . . . sans se préoccuper des liaisons avec les voisins.*' The F.E.C. enjoyed two considerable advantages in applying its tactics.[57] The first was that it was composed almost entirely of regular troops. The second was that many of its officers were holding, in this first large formation of the renascent French army in the field, appointments which were lower than those for which their experience qualified them. The standard of leadership was therefore very high. The F.E.C. too possessed plenty of mules, one of the essential means of administrative backing for operations in mountains.* Nevertheless, in spite of this backing, troops were expected to live on dry rations during operations, and to endure hunger and thirst as a matter of course. Indeed, shortage of ammunition was considered to be the only unquestionable reason for calling a halt.

2nd U.S. Corps (Major-General Geoffrey T. Keyes) was the left-hand formation of 5th Army. Its 85th and 88th Divisions had not fought in a big battle but they were able to arrange special training during March and to gain some experience of the front line, admittedly in static defence.† Two points are noteworthy in 2nd

---

* Each Infantry Regiment of 4th Moroccan Mountain Division had 600 mules as First Line transport, and the division held 600 (two companies) besides the regimental mules.[58] The F.E.C. possessed eight companies for allotment as required. The French reckoned on working their mules for twelve hours out of twenty-four, and on covering a minimum of twelve miles in that period. The basic administrative figure for all supplies including ammunition was:

Mountain Division: 18–20 pounds per man per day.
Infantry Division: 22 pounds per man per day.

† *2nd U.S. Corps Outline Order of Battle*[59]

Corps Troops:

Armour 760th Tank Battalion.

Reconnaissance 91st and 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons.

Artillery Field Battalions 59th, 93rd (105-mm howitzer), 173rd (155-mm gun), 601st, 602nd, (75-mm pack howitzer), 631st, 936th, 937th (155-mm howitzer), 697th (240-mm howitzer), 932nd (8-inch howitzer), 935th (4.5-inch gun).

85th U.S. Infantry Division (Major-General John B. Coulter):

337th Regimental Combat Team (Colonel Oliver W. Hughes):
337th Infantry Regiment, 328th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer), Company 'A' 310th Engineer Combat Battalion.

338th Regimental Combat Team (Colonel Alfred A. Safay):
338th Infantry Regiment, 329th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer), Company 'B' 310th Engineer Combat Battalion.

339th Regimental Combat Team (Lieutenant-Colonel Brookner W. Brady):
339th Infantry Regiment, 910th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer), Company 'C' 310th Engineer Combat Battalion.

Not included in R.C.Ts: 403rd Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzer).

Continued over page

Digitized by Google

U.S. Corps' Order of Battle and in the special preparatory training of its infantry. The first was the large amount of medium and, by British standards, heavy artillery. The second was that the infantry were told that they would have to rely on their feet, would have to tackle rough ground, and would have to march hard and far. They were exercised accordingly.

General Keyes had prepared an outline plan by as early a date as 28th March, but did not issue his final plan until 1st May.[40] The 5th Army plan had given 2nd U.S. Corps the following objectives (from right to left) in its first two phases:

I. Damiano (Pt 411) – the so-called 'S' ridge running south-west from a point near S. Maria Infante.
II. Mt Cerri and Castellonorato, and then Spigno and Mt La Civita.

These objectives were indeed much the same as those which 5th and 56th Divisions had been unable to take in January. Keyes decided to split the Army's first two phases into three phases for his Corps, and to use the more experienced of his two divisions, the 88th, on the right and 85th U.S. Division on the left. And so the phases of the attack would be:

I. 88th U.S. Division to capture S. Maria Infante: 85th U.S. Division to capture the 'S' ridge south of S. Maria Infante and the S. Martino hill.
II. 88th U.S. Division to capture Mt Cerri and Mt dei Bracchi; 85th U.S. Division to stand fast and help 88th by fire.
III. 88th U.S. Division to take Spigno and Mt La Civita; 85th U.S. Division to take Castellonorato and Mt Scauri and to continue to advance westwards.

The Corps' artillery plan for Phase I was in two parts. From Zero hour a counter-battery programme was to be fired by the medium and heavy artillery for one hour and twenty minutes. The field artillery was to engage the enemy's front line for forty-five minutes from Zero; and then to switch its fire to command posts, reserve

---

Continued

88th U.S. Infantry Division (Major-General John E. Sloan):
349th Regimental Combat Team (Colonel Joseph R. Crawford):
349th Infantry Regiment, 337th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer), Company 'A' 313th Engineer Combat Battalion.
350th Regimental Combat Team (Colonel John C. Fry):
350th Infantry Regiment, 338th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer), Company 'B' 313th Engineer Combat Battalion.
351st Regimental Combat Team (Colonel Arthur S. Champeny):
351st Infantry Regiment, 913th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer), Company 'C' 313th Engineer Combat Battalion.
Not included in R.C.Ts: 339th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer).

(a) A U.S. Infantry Regiment usually consisted of three battalions, each battalion was composed of 37 officers and 857 men.
(b) The strength of a R.C.T. was about 200 officers and 3,800 men.

Digitized by Google

positions and supply routes. The medium and heavy artillery was to join in this programme for three hours. A cruiser was allotted to the Corps for five days in order to engage special targets.

(v)

Alexander had suggested that two battles on the scale of Alamein might have to be fought before he reached Rome but he understated the size of his offensive. At Alamein one British army was engaged, composed of three corps which contained the equivalent of eleven divisions. The battle lasted for twelve days. In his offensive in the spring of 1944 Alexander commanded two armies which included seven corps with the equivalent of twenty-eight divisions. The battle lasted for twenty-four days without any noticeable pause. There were three separate sectors for some time, that of 8th Army, that of 5th Army less 6th U.S. Corps, and that of 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio, but the fighting in any one sector often affected the fortunes of battles in the others. Moreover Alexander had planned his offensive as a whole and directed it as one battle, controlling the operations carried on by Leese, Clark and Truscott, each in his own sector. To simplify the story we can divide the whole great battle into the following phases:

I. 12th to 18th May. The breaking of the Gustav Line by 5th and 8th Armies and their advance to the Hitler Line.
II. 19th to 25th May. The breaking of the Hitler Line by both Armies.
III. (a) 23rd May to 26th May. 6th U.S. Corps' offensive from its beachhead at Anzio.
(b) 26th May to 4th June. The advance to Rome by the reunited 5th Army and by 8th Army.

The dates which are given as the end of the phases are no more than indications because operations are not switched on and off like electric lights. We will describe each phase in the next three chapters.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

5th AND 8th ARMIES BREAK THE GUSTAV LINE (12th to 18th MAY 1944)

(i)

ALLIED soldiers in Italy on the eve of Alexander's spring offensive numbered about half a million although nothing like this number took part in the coming battles.[1] The strength of the three Corps of 8th Army were: 13th Corps stood at 98,431, 1st Canadian Corps at 43,487, and the Polish Corps at 45,626.* Headquarters 8th Army stood at 1,744, quite a modest figure if one considers its very many functions.

By the end of April the formations of 8th and 5th Armies were in general occupying the positions from which they would attack during the night 11th/12th May. Every night of the first ten days of May was filled with all kinds of activities. Defensive patrols watched the whole front to prevent German reconnaissance patrols from penetrating and capturing prisoners who, if loose-tongued, might give away valuable information. What Allied troops would attack? When would they attack? The fifteen prisoners captured from the Allied armies during this period gave very little, and misleading, information. Behind the protective screen the troops laboured

---

* (a)

13th Corps		*Canadian Corps*	
Corps Troops	24,416	Corps Troops	9,961
4th Division	22,458	1st Canadian Division	18,799
78th Division	18,583	5th Canadian Armoured Division	11,832
8th Indian Division	22,633	1st Canadian Armoured Brigade	2,895
6th Armoured Division	10,341		

Polish Corps

Corps Troops	14,990
3rd Carpathian Division	13,592
5th Kresowa Division	14,330
2nd Polish Armoured Brigade	2,714

(b) General Strength, Allied land forces:

British	253,859
U.S.	231,306
French	71,827
Polish	45,626

Digitized by Google

nightly to bring forward and to put in place material of every kind from 360-lb shells to tins of sardines. Before each day broke, each night's accumulation had to be hidden, buried in holes and ditches, or dumped in whatever natural cover could be found and camouflaged. By day the whole front had to appear inert, and the more things changed the more they had to be made to look the same to German observers on the high ground. The success of the camouflage measures was outstanding, especially the concealment of the mass of artillery and ammunition which was put in position under the Germans' noses.

The night of the attack was warm, the sky was clear, and some mist was forming in the valleys of the Gari and Liri and in pockets of the high ground.[2] Almost every first hand report mentions that the nightingales sang enchantingly and continued their songs during the uproar of the night's battles. Before 11 p.m. only the customary noises of war on this front were heard. Here and there a battery fired the harassing shoots which the Germans had learned to expect, and here and there machine guns stammered, and salvos of mortar bombs thudded, when watchful posts fired at shapes, real or imaginary, in the darkness twinkling with fireflies. When darkness fell men came out of hiding and made final preparations with deliberation, or sometimes with desperate haste as did a 'waterman' party of the East Surreys who had to run a mile and a half to the place where their assault boats lay hidden. Every man now knew the hour at which he would go into action, and many understood what had earlier seemed mere routine training; for example, the engineers of 4th Division, who were to build Amazon bridge, had built replicas twice by day and once by night during training.

The thoughts of men during the fateful hours just before a great attack vary with each man's temperament. Probably all feel the greatness of the occasion unless war-weariness has filled their minds with apathy and resentment. Men experience every emotion and thought from exhilaration to acute fear, and states of mind succeed each other, or pass only to return, or most strangely occur almost simultaneously. Appearances tell very little, and history suggests that each observer sees a different picture. An Engineer officer (now General Sir William Jackson), writing of the 4th Division, noted 'the curiously expressionless faces of the small files of infantry as they moved forward along the tracks leading to the Gari. They seemed almost mechanical as if they were part of a machine whose purpose they did not really understand.'* On the contrary, reports from infantrymen suggest that they knew very well what they were about to do. Few people spare a thought for officers in high com-

* W. G. F. Jackson: *The Battle for Rome* (London 1969) p. 90.

Digitized by Google

mand in a modern army and for their unenviable lot before a great battle. Their work for the moment is done; they must on no account fuss or interfere with their subordinates; they cannot, like commanders in ancient times, make speeches to the troops; they must—for many hours—wait until the first reports of success, failure or partial failure reach their headquarters.

At 11 p.m. on 11th May the massed artillery of 8th and 5th Armies, some 1,700 guns and howitzers, opened fire and during the next twelve hours fired up to 420 rounds per gun.[3] This bombardment surpassed the already legendary bombardment which had begun the battle of El Alamein. The sight and sound were at first astonishing and awe-inspiring. Behind the Allied troops the night sky flamed with gun flashes. The noise soon acquired an irregular cadence as if of a horde of lunatic drummers beating all at once rolls, flams, ruffles and swells. An expert might have distinguished the high-pitched crack of heavy anti-aircraft guns at one end of the scale and at the other the bellowing of 240-mm howitzers, and, in between, the chorus from weapons of some ten other calibres. Soon however the ordinary man heard, when his ear had accustomed itself, only noise like the roar of breakers on a distant shore, and overhead the sough and whiffle of shells in flight. Between 12th and 18th May the artillery of 13th Corps alone expended 476,413 rounds of artillery ammunition, of which 348,943 were 25-pdr shells.

After the opening of the bombardment the battle on the Allied side passed for some hours mainly into the hands of junior leaders and their men. On the German side the more senior commanders in the field seem to have been unnerved and prevented from regaining their balance by the unflagging momentum of the offensive. As time went on the defence by 14th Panzer Corps and 51st Mountain Corps became fragmented, and their fighting, though fierce, became ill-coordinated. Hard pressed formations splintered and no one knew what became of the splinters. Many orders were issued and overtaken by events before they could be acted upon. To begin the story we will look quickly along the fronts of 5th and 8th Armies during the first twenty-four hours of battle, from left to right, roughly in the order in which Allied infantry went into action.

(ii)

See Map 5

85th U.S. Division was poised to attack from the area of Trimonsuoli. Facing it from Mt Scauri to the Ausente stream were 94th

Digitized by Google

Infantry Division's (Steinmetz) 274th and 267th Grenadier Regiments. 276th Grenadier Regiment was in reserve, coast watching.[4]* The main tactical feature was a ridge studded with knolls, called 'S' ridge by the Americans, which ran from south-west of S. Maria Infante at the northern end to Solacciano at the southern end.[5] The ridge was covered with terraced fields, vineyards and olive trees, and scattered farm buildings. The knolls Pts 131 and 126 were the main German strongpoints. The Americans had to capture the ridge because it commanded S. Maria Infante (an objective of 88th U.S. Division) and a stretch of the road Formia–Ausonia. This awkward objective was allotted to 338th Infantry, and S. Martino hill, west of the Capo d'Acqua stream, was given to 339th Infantry. 337th Infantry was in reserve except for its 3rd Battalion attached to the 339th. 756th Tank Battalion supported the attack.

338th Infantry began its attack at 11 p.m. on 11th May, and fought its way stubbornly in the darkness from post to post through heavy machine gun, mortar, and shell fire. The fight went on through the night and all day long on the 12th. At nightfall 338th Infantry had taken the southern half of the ridge, from Solacciano to Pt 131. The 1st Battalion had been reduced to about 350 men and the 3rd to about 200 men, having lost more than half their strength. 339th Infantry had not been able to attack because its right flank would have been dangerously exposed to fire from the German posts on 'S' ridge.

On 85th U.S. Division's right, 88th U.S. Division had enough room to deploy 350th Infantry on the right to capture the hills south-west of Castelforte, and on the left 351st Infantry to capture S. Maria Infante. The German troops who held these positions were part of 71st Infantry Division (Raapke).[6] 194th Grenadier Regiment was in and around Castelforte: 211th Grenadier Regiment was near S. Maria Infante, supported by the reconnaissance battalions of 94th Infantry Division and of 114th Jäger Division.†

350th Infantry attacked at 11 p.m. on 11th May and was quickly successful, 1st Battalion capturing the terraced height of Damiano (Pt 411), where so many men had died in the battles of January and February, and later taking the village of Ventosa. Early on 12th May 2nd and 3rd Battalions, supported by part of 753rd Tank Battalion, cleared the south-western slopes of Damiano, and seized

---

* A contemporary German map suggests that the battalions of 274th and 267th Grenadier Regiments were somewhat intermingled, but does not pin-point their positions. There is some doubt too about the boundary between 94th Infantry Division's left and 71st Infantry Division's right. German records give the line Minturno—Pt 156—Solacciano—Mt Petrella, but it is probable that the line was less definite on the ground.

† The two reconnaissance battalions were replacing part of 211th Grenadier Regiment which had been withdrawn to refit.

Digitized by Google

Ceracoli hill. The next objective was Mt Rotondo but an attack upon it had to wait until 3rd Algerian Infantry Division had advanced to Castelforte.

On the left 351st Infantry had sterner work. The ground which it had to cross was very much like 'S' ridge and was studded with mutually supporting posts; moreover it could be enfiladed from 'S' ridge. 351st Infantry, moving off at 11 p.m., attacked northwards along the Minturno–S. Maria Infante road and across the slopes east of it. It was a dour struggle which went on throughout 12th May. By nightfall the American infantry had advanced about a mile and a half and had come to a temporary standstill. Nevertheless, 71st Infantry Division had been badly battered by the intense fire of the American artillery—one battalion of field artillery alone fired 4,268 rounds—and had committed all its reserves in this sector.[7] The two American divisions had still some way to go to capture all their objectives, but they had made a satisfactory beginning.

The French commanders, looking northwards, had recognised that the keystone of the German defences facing them was formed by Mt Faito (Pt 803) on the right, by Mt Feuci on the left, and beyond these, by Mt Girofano on the right and by Mt Majo (Pt 940) on the left.[8] They shrewdly expected that the German positions among these summits would not have much depth. The terrain was steep and rough but did offer, as Juin and his commanders saw, much dead ground which could not be covered everywhere by German posts. It was very probable that the Germans would draw a false sense of security from ground which they would assume was almost impassable to forces of effective strength. The French expected to gain some surprise if they attacked this keystone, and believed that the speed, skill, and determination of their mountain-trained troops would give them a fair chance of breaking the German positions. The French view was summarized by Juin at a later date in the words 'This is the warfare to which we are accustomed'.[9]

The German defences in the area of Mts Faito, Feuci, Girofano, and Majo were what the French called block-houses, built of boulders, sometimes reinforced with concrete, and surrounded by barbed wire entanglements sprinkled with anti-personnel mines.[10] The mountains lay in 71st Infantry Division's sector. 191st Grenadier Regiment—a two-battalion regiment—held Mts Faito, Feuci, and Majo, while 2nd and 3rd Battalions of 131st Grenadier Regiment (from 44th Infantry Division but under command of 71st Infantry Division) and 71st Infantry Division's reconnaissance battalion continued the line northwards from the Castelluccio ridge. 1st

Digitized by Google

Battalion, 131st Grenadier Regiment lay at S. Ambrogio; 2nd Battalion, 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 15th Panzer Grenadier Division) was at Vallemaio, and 44th Infantry Division's reconnaissance battalion, on loan to 71st Infantry Division, was at S. Andrea. It is probable that the German troops were fairly thin on the ground because a usual strength for a battalion, after the winter's fighting, was about 400 men.

Dody's 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division had been given the honourable task of capturing Mts Faito, Girofano, and Majo (see Chapter II). 4th Moroccan Infantry Regiment, on the right, had Mts Cerasola and Girofano as its first objectives, and was then to advance to Mt Agrifoglio, thus outflanking Mt Majo from the north. On the left, 8th Moroccan Infantry Regiment was to capture Mt Faito, and then Mt Majo. Dody looked on this regiment's task as the principal one for his division. On 8th Moroccan Infantry Regiment's left 6th Moroccan Infantry from Sevez' 4th Moroccan Mountain Division was to seize Mt Feuci as a prelude to turning southward down a ridge to attack Colle Ceschito, in rear of Castelforte. The artillery of the F.E.C. was to join in 5th Army's counter-battery programme but was not to fire on 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division's objectives, because of a hope that a 'silent' attack by the infantry might surprise the German troops.*

Between Mt Ornito (Pt 764), which the French held, and Mt Faito (Pt 803) there was a connecting ridge a little over eight hundred yards long and four hundred yards wide.[12] The climb was a little less than three hundred feet, but the ground was very rough and covered with boulders and scrub. Shortly after 11 p.m. 1st Battalion, 8th Moroccan Infantry began to advance up the connecting ridge and was at once discovered by the Germans who were very alert. Very lights shot into the air, and the streams of red and green tracer bullets, beloved of the Germans, swept the ridge, while mortar bombs showered down, bursting and scattering their razor-edged fragments. But 1st Battalion was not to be stopped, and

---

* A 'silent' attack is so called because it is made without direct artillery support. Besides the French Expeditionary Corps' own artillery the following American artillery was in support: 4 battalions of 155-mm howitzers; 1 battalion of 4.5-inch guns, 2 battalions of 8-inch howitzers; 1 battalion of 240-mm howitzers.[11] The metric calibres are in inches roughly:

155-mm	—	6.1 inches
240-mm	—	9.4 inches

For D day artillery ammunition was allotted to F.E.C. on the scale:

	r.p.g.
4.5-inch gun	250
155-mm howitzer	250
155-mm gun 8-inch howitzer	200
240-mm howitzer	100

Digitized by Google

swept on in a series of furious dogfights until it cleared the summit of Mt Faito. A company then went down into the gully which lay between Mt Faito and Mt Feuci and dug itself in among the boulders at the foot of the opposite slope. The remaining battalions of the regiment established themselves on Mt Faito which, as the daylight of the morning of the 12th grew, was heavily shelled. For the time being no further advance was possible. 8th Moroccan Infantry had penetrated the German defences at a high cost—for its leading company had been decimated—but had achieved more than was apparent at the time.

Elsewhere the French had been disappointed. On the right, 4th Moroccan Infantry Regiment had been pinned down by fire from Mt Cerasola and Mt Girofano. On the left, 6th Moroccan Infantry Regiment (4th Moroccan Mountain Division) had advanced towards the western shoulder of Mt Feuci but it too had been pinned down except for one battalion which swung right and joined 8th Moroccan Infantry on Mt Faito. The French official historian remarks of the morning of 12th May *'Ces quelques brèches ne constituent pas la rupture escompetée'*.* The failure was attributed to the choice of a 'silent' attack and the consequent absence of heavy, direct artillery support. At his headquarters in Sessa Aurunca Juin decided that he must renew his attack in a different way and went forward to confer briefly with Dody and Sevez, and then climbed Mt Faito to see things for himself. The sights included no less than three wounded battalion commanders being carried down. They also included a German counter-attack, mounted on the afternoon of 12th May by 2nd Battalion, 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment which Raapke (71st Infantry Division) had brought forward from Vallemaio with orders to clear Mt Faito.[13] Juin saw how this battalion's attack was repulsed by intense fire from the French artillery, and was also encouraged by the news he was receiving from Castelforte.

In that quarter de Monsabert saw 88th U.S. Division take Damiano hill (Pt 411) and Ventosa, and thereupon launched his armoured group and part of 4th Tunisian Infantry Regiment against Castelforte.† This force won a foothold in the outskirts of the little town, a modest first step towards Coreno and Ausonia. What he had seen decided Juin to continue his attacks against the German keystone. In the early hours of 13th May one attack was to capture Mt Girofano, and a second attack was to capture Mts Feuci and Majo. The attacks were to be in succession so that the

* Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie (1943–1944)*. (*op. cit.*) p. 102.

† 3rd Algerian Division's armoured group consisted of 755th U.S. Tank Battalion, 4th Moroccan Reconnaissance Regiment, 7th A/Tk Regiment (Chasseurs d'Afrique).

Digitized by Google

whole F.E.C. artillery could support each in turn. The roles of divisions were unchanged.

See Map 7

The river Gari was little wider than the length of a cricket pitch at the places where 4th Division and 8th Indian Division intended to cross, but it was over six feet deep and the stream ran fast.[14] The Bode Blocking Group held the west bank with 576th Grenadier Regiment in the area of S. Angelo, and 1st and 3rd Battalions, 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 15th Panzer Grenadier Division) continuing the line to Cassino railway station. All these were good and determined battalions, but here as elsewhere in the Gustav Line the German positions had little depth. Too many tactical cooks may have had a finger in the pie of siting them and great reliance seems to have been placed on the obstacle formed by the river and the well built field-works which covered it. The impossibility of wading, the fast current, and the German defenders turned the passage of this small river into a difficult and dangerous operation for 13th Corps. Fortunately the men who planned the crossings in detail recognised the difficulties and produced practical solutions, while those who crossed disregarded the dangers. The assaulting brigades and their battalions borrowed and adapted much of the technique of an opposed landing from the sea. Assault boating and rafting was treated as a task distinct from fighting and was entrusted to sub-units and units in reserve which trained for it. Parties were told off solely to carry assault boats and rafts and launch them. Beachmasters with controllers, checkers, guides and signallers were appointed to manage the embarkation and disembarkation of the assaulting units. Assaulting units were told off in tactical flights, and were given their assembly areas, routes to river bank, and sequences and time-tables for embarkation. Routes to the river bank were marked and swept (not always completely) of American and British mines which had been laid since January when 5th Army had gone over to the defensive in this sector. Nearly every assaulting unit decided that boats and rafts would be hauled to and fro along ropes. These ropes had to be carried across the river by paddled boats and swimmers during the first minutes of the operation, and these men's courage and luck would decide whether the crossing could begin at all. If they faltered, or drowned, or were hit, the crossings might go wrong at the start. Everyone knew that key men would be killed or wounded, that boats and rafts would be damaged or sunk, that confusion in one form or another was bound to occur here or there. Yet everyone knew his duty, whether it was to keep boats and rafts moving across the river or to scramble up the far bank

Digitized by Google

and plunge into the fight. Men who took part recall that every arrangement was well understood and had been well rehearsed. The drive and impetus of the crossings were in fact maintained with extraordinary resolution. There were very many men with no memorial, who were of the same mettle as Private H. W. Grainger of the Hampshires who three times swam the river to carry lines across, and between whiles stood naked on the enemy's bank, under fire, to haul men up from boats and rafts.[15] He, alas, was killed next day.

As the guns of the Allied armies opened fire, 4th Division's 10th and 28th Infantry Brigades and 8th Indian Division's 17th and 19th Indian Infantry Brigades moved forward to put boats and rafts into the water and to launch the first flights of assaulting infantry. Nearly everywhere the work began on time, although difficulties appeared with startling speed. A dense mist which had formed in the valley after a clear spell was soon made denser by smoke and dust, and turned movement into an exasperating, bewildering Blind Man's Buff. A saving grace during the first hours was that the Germans could not see the exact crossing-places and so bring down defensive fire accurately upon them. To turn first to 4th Division, 10th Infantry Brigade's leading battalion, 1st/6th East Surreys, passed two companies over 'Rhine' crossing but lost every boat, either sunk or swept downstream when empty. Reserve boats were launched, and in something over two hours the assaulting companies of the East Surreys had crossed, and in any sort of order and in small groups, were groping doggedly through a minefield under fire towards their first objective, Pt 36, a small bluff which was a German strongpoint. Hard on the East Surreys' heels the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment crossed, twelve men at a time on the sole surviving ferry. They too formed up and groped towards the Cassino–S. Angelo road (the Brown Line) which they reached at sunrise (5.48 a.m. on 12th May) just as the East Surreys stormed Pt 36. The battle had now fallen well behind the time-table (the Blue Line by 3.30 a.m.) and work on the bridges, even the all-important Amazon, had been stopped by mortar and machine-gun fire. Ward ordered Shoosmith to hold his shallow bridgehead, and switched his artillery to defensive fire. A battle presents a bewildering variety of appearances, and much of a commander's art lies in his ability to sense what is happening. It is a commonplace to say that a commander's feel of the battle depends greatly upon where he is and what he is doing. Thus in the small hours of the 12th Shoosmith signalled to the East Surreys 'Hold hard to present positions. Defensive fire forms solid ring round you . . . You have

Digitized by Google

done magnificently.'[16] On the other hand an Engineer diarist, frustrated and perturbed, noted in his Log for 12th May:

> '0330. HQ R.E. confirms that things are sticky. Something has gone amiss.
> 0400. News of mortar and close machine gun fire on Amazon Bridge site. Tps forced to withdraw.
> 0500. Bad news . . . .
> Morning passes . . . rafting teams have taken a licking . . . one raft built and sunk—no armour, no guns across R. Gari. Combined Div. R.E. attempt [bridging] to be made in evening. Things desperate.[17]

Things were nothing of the kind, and at 7 p.m. the diarist had a different impression and noted 'Work going fine'.

In 28th Infantry Brigade the 2nd Battalion of The King's Liverpool Regiment and the Somerset Light Infantry were newcomers to battle and their first battle was far from being an easy one.* Brigadier Scott's plan was for the King's to cross by 'X' and 'Y' crossings (on the left of 10th Infantry Brigade) and advance to the Brown Line. The Somersets were to follow and to advance to the Blue Line; the Hampshires were in reserve.† The preliminaries of the crossing were punctually completed but the King's lost their way in the fog and were thirty-five minutes late.[19] The launching of the first flights was hurried, scrambled and confused. The delay lost the King's the period when the artillery's counter-battery fire was keeping down the heads of the German gunners and mortar-crews, and the battalion now suffered from defensive fire which here was well directed in spite of the dust and smoke. Three companies gradually reached the enemy's bank, piecemeal, and found themselves enmeshed in scattered mines and under fire from the front and flanks. They dug in to hold the sliver of ground which they had gained but were too disorganised to advance.

The Somerset Light Infantry, keeping to their time-table, became entangled with the rear of the King's; and other units, mainly engineers and their vehicles, keeping to their time-tables, became entangled with the Somersets. Mist, smoke, and dust blanketed the river bank, and signal communications broke down. The troops and vehicles often elbowed each other out of the mine-swept lanes and assembling-places on their own bank and into old minefields.

* On 1st December 1943 2nd Gibraltar Brigade was redesignated 28th Infantry Brigade.[18] The two battalions mentioned above had been in the Gibraltar Brigade. The new brigade reached Italy, after a spell in Egypt, on 16th March 1944. 2nd/4th Battalion Hampshire Regiment, a battle-seasoned battalion, joined in Italy.

† The Brown Line was the Cassino–S. Angelo road about one thousand yards west of the Gari. The Blue Line was one thousand yards west of Brown.

Digitized by Google

For a time the ferries at both 'X' and 'Y' crossings stopped because the boats had been sunk or smashed. Rumours of failure began to spread. Order however did not break down and Platt, commanding the Somersets, went from crossing to crossing, steadying, organising, and restoring methodical movement. 'D' Company of the Hampshires who were working the ferries stuck to their task, spare boats were found and launched, and a company of the Somersets crossed at 'X', and then the last of the King's and two more Somerset companies at 'Y'. Although both battalions had crossed the river by sunrise, they were too mixed up to do anything except dig in. By a stroke of misfortune both Commanding Officers were wounded, Platt severely and Garnons Williams of the King's mortally.

4th Division had put four battalions across the Gari but their situation was dangerous. Almost all the assault boats had been destroyed, but in any case this cumbersome, slow means of crossing could not go on. Everything now hung upon bridging. Towards the evening of the 12th Ward decided that 'Amazon' bridge must be built during the coming night, cost what it might, and that he would then send across it 12th Infantry Brigade and 17th/21st Lancers (61 Shermans, Mk III) at 5 a.m. on the 13th to carry the attack onwards.[20]

8th Indian Division's final moves to launch boats and the first flights of infantry went through without serious upset.[21] The mist on the Gari had become thick and visibility lowered to about six feet, which may explain why the German small-arms fire was high during the crossings. In 17th Indian Infantry Brigade, on the right, 1st Battalion the Royal Fusiliers was to cross the river north of S. Angelo ('A' Crossing) and 1st/12th Frontier Force Regiment south of that village ('B' Crossing). 1st/5th Gurkha Rifles, in reserve, was to cross later by either crossing in accordance with whatever the tactical situation might be. The brigade's first objective was the line of the Cassino–S. Angelo road rather over one thousand yards west of the river, and included S. Angelo.

The two leading battalions crossed without much difficulty, but once upon the enemy's bank they found the mist bewildering: many sections advanced blindly in single file, each man holding on to the bayonet-scabbard of the man in front. The German posts, thoroughly aroused by the artillery bombardment, brought down their prearranged defensive fire from guns and mortars, and the fire of light automatics on well chosen fixed lines. By 2 a.m. the Royal Fusiliers came to a standstill about five hundred yards from the river's bank and dug in. The timed barrage had rolled away beyond the German positions, and a further advance was impossible without a fresh plan.

Digitized by Google

On the Royal Fusiliers' left, 1st/12th F.F.R. stumbled across trip-wires and through mines, small-arms fire and grenades in some confusion. By daylight the flank companies had gained lodgments on their first objective but troops in the centre had been checked a short distance from it. Meanwhile 5th Gurkhas had been crossing the river at 'B' in the last four assault boats afloat, completing the passage at about 6 a.m. on the 12th. Before the whole battalion had crossed, two companies attacked S. Angelo village but were pinned down and were later withdrawn in preparation for a second assault by the whole battalion.

On the right of 19th Indian Infantry Brigade, 3rd/8th Punjab Regiment was to cross the river by 'C', roughly opposite Casali, and was to take, as a first objective, some hillocks a short distance west of the Cassino–S. Angelo road. On the left of the 3rd/8th, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were to cross by 'D' (roughly opposite Panaccioni) and then to wheel left to cut off the tongue of land in the Liri Appendix and any Germans in it.

Neither battalion crossed the river unscathed. 3rd/8th Punjab crossed in boats but these were sunk or damaged until only one boat supplemented by two rafts were left afloat. As each company reached the enemy's shore it plunged into a savage battle fought without artillery support because the timed barrage had moved on. 'A' Company fought its way forward until its fifteen survivors were overrun by a counter-attack. One whole platoon of the Sikh company vanished and their bodies were found later lying in a swathe in front of a German strongpoint which the 30 unwounded men of this company had captured. The remaining two companies were held up by three German posts on their right flank. The call was made for a volunteer to creep round and engage the Germans from the rear as a diversion to help a frontal attack. It was answered by Sepoy Kamal Ram, who then, single-handed, shot or bayoneted the three occupants of the first post, stormed on to destroy the defenders of the second, and, with the help of a N.C.O. annihilated the third. These extraordinary feats, and a fourth later in the morning, won Kamal Ram the V.C. He was nineteen years of age and this was his first battle. 3rd/8th Punjab for the time being could do no more. On the left of 3rd/8th, the Argylls had the misfortune to cross at the exact point which the Germans had chosen as a defensive fire task. Five platoons only managed to cross before all boats and rafts were destroyed. This handful dug in and held its ground.

While the infantry struggled for a bridgehead, the Bengal Sappers and Miners accomplished a great feat of courage, determination, and skill. Disregarding fire, they built the Oxford Class 40 Bailey bridge a mile south of S. Angelo by 8.40 a.m. on the 12th May, and the 'patent' Class 30 Bailey bridge, carried on the back of one Canadian

Digitized by Google

tank and pushed by another, was successfully launched at Plymouth by 10 a.m., a thousand yards south of Oxford. The Shermans of the Ontario Regiment then began to cross the river by Oxford and those of the Calgary Regiment by Plymouth. And so, by the morning of the 12th May, 8th Indian Division had won a small bridgehead, had built two good bridges, and had still in hand 21st Indian Infantry Brigade. Before nightfall five squadrons of Canadian tanks had successfully crossed, making the bridgehead secure.

See Map 8

At 1 a.m. on 12th May 5th Wilenska Infantry Brigade (5th Kresowa Division) and 1st Carpathian Rifle Brigade (3rd Carpathian Division) began their attacks on the German positions situated on the massif of Mt Cassino between Colle S. Angelo and Pts 593 and 569.[22] This area was held by 3rd Parachute Regiment whose 2nd Battalion was on Colle S. Angelo and near the Albaneta Farm, and whose 1st Battalion was in the area of Pts 593 and 569. 6th Lwowska Infantry Brigade was to protect the right flank of the attacks from interference, and 2nd Carpathian Rifle Brigade, on Colle Majola and part of the d'Onifrio Ridge, was to protect the left. By the time that the Polish infantry stepped off, the troops of Heidrich's 1st Parachute Division were fully alert because the battle had been raging for two hours in the Liri valley just below. The Polish commanders had expected the enemy to be alert but hoped that this disadvantage would be outweighed by the fact that by 1 a.m. their own infantry would have more moonlight for crossing the broken ground that lay before them. They did not, of course, know that Heidrich, on 22nd April, had accurately predicted that the next big Allied attack in his sector would be directed against Albaneta Farm and the knolls north-west of it. When eventually the German positions had been captured on 17th and 18th May, it was seen how well their excellent overhead cover had withstood the Allied bombardment. The defences, sited in crevices and hollows among the rocks and in natural and artificial caves, were as safe as badger sets.

In 5th Brigade the task of 13th Wilenska Rifle Battalion, on the right, was to capture the northern part of Phantom Ridge and then the S. Angelo hill. On the left, 15th Wilenska Rifle Battalion was to capture the southern part of Phantom Ridge and then Pt 575. 18th Lwowska Rifle Battalion (from 6th Brigade) was to follow 15th Battalion but was not to leave its forming-up place until 15th Battalion had begun to advance to Pt 575. 5th Division's artillery, with more allotted by the Corps, was to support the attack, first

Digitized by Google

by neutralising the German mortars, and then by engaging the German posts on the successive objectives.*

In 1st Carpathian Rifle Brigade, 1st Carpathian Rifle Battalion, on the right, was to capture the Albaneta Farm.[23] 2nd Carpathian Rifle Battalion, on the left, was to capture first Pt 593 and then Pt 569; and when these had been taken, the Carpathian Division would mount a fresh attack against the spur of Mt Cassino (Monastery Hill) and the Abbey. The Carpathian Division's artillery, with additions from the Corps artillery, would support 1st Brigade's attacks, first by neutralising the German mortars, and then the German defensive localities.†[24]

5th Brigade's attack was ill-starred from the beginning.[25] The 8th Army's counter-battery fire had not neutralised the German mortars in their lairs, usually dug-down on reverse slopes, and the divisional artillery had not been more successful against mortars and machine gun nests. By the time the 13th and 15th Battalions reached the bottom of Phantom Ridge they had lost a fifth of their strength. Nevertheless parts of both battalions reached the crest, and were pinned down there by a murderous cross fire on a narrow and exposed piece of ground, steadily losing men. After a time part of 13th Battalion was withdrawn to Pt 706 by the Commander of the 'Half Battalion' (a Polish sub-unit which has no British equivalent). Meanwhile communications between the two battalions and Brigade headquarters had broken down owing to casualties among the signallers. 18th Battalion, therefore, rather than remain inactive, advanced to Phantom Ridge which it reached at 6.30 a.m. on the 12th. There it remained until 1 p.m. when its commander withdrew it. Other troops mistakenly withdrew with 18th, and about four companies in all of 13th and 15th Battalions remained on Phantom Ridge which they held against German counter-attacks —the small, swift, savage onslaughts which were a feature of German tactics.

In 1st Carpathian Rifle Brigade 2nd Battalion captured Pt 593 by 2 a.m. and pressed onward towards Pt 569 only to be held up below its crest by fire from the Abbey and other German posts on their left flank. Here the battalion beat off counter-attacks, one after another, until at 11.30 a.m. it was forced back to Pt 593. 1st Battalion had no better fortune. The approach to the Albaneta Farm lay

---

* Additional artillery provided by Polish Corps: 7th Polish Horse Artillery Regiment; 4th N.Z. Field Regiment; two Polish medium batteries, 140th Medium Regiment R.A.; one battery 102nd Medium Regiment R.A.

† Additional artillery provided by Polish Corps: 7th Polish Field Regiment; 9th Polish Field Regiment; 10th and 11th Polish Medium Regiments; two Heavy Batteries R.A.; two Heavy A.A. Batteries R.A.

Digitized by Google

through the gorge which the Germans had covered by frontal and flanking fire. A few Polish infantry managed to struggle through but the battalion as a whole came to a standstill. The whole of one troop of tanks which had worked down from Cavendish Road was knocked out by mines, and of a mine-clearing party of twenty Polish engineers eighteen were killed or wounded.

During the morning of the 12th General Anders decided at first to mount another attack at 3 p.m., using his sparse reserves. But as the morning passed and as he learned more of the casualties among his troops and their consequent disorganisation, he decided to withdraw them, and to reorganise for an attack during the night of 12th/13th May. General Leese approved Anders' decision but fixed the time of the fresh attack as not earlier than the afternoon of 13th May, and later postponed it until the 15th. The attack so far had cost the Poles some 1,800 casualties, and once again the combination of the Cassino positions and Heidrich's splendid 1st Parachute Division had proved unbeatable.[26]

The solid success of the first night and day of Alexander's offensive was that 13th Corps had won a bridgehead, admittedly shallow, on the west bank of the Gari, and had bridged the river in two places. The Allied commanders had indeed hoped for more than this yet no one was discouraged and all were planning to continue their attacks or to mount fresh ones. On the evening of the 12th May Alexander sent a cool and accurate summary to Sir Alan Brooke:

> 'On the whole the battle has gone fairly well considering the stubbornness of the opposition. This is the Poles first battle and the same applies to 85 and 88 U.S. Divisions. 13 Corps have made a good start by getting across the Rapido River [Gari] at all points. I saw both army commanders this morning and they are reasonably satisfied with the opening stages of the battle, but there is no doubt that the Germans intend to fight for every yard and that the next few days will see some extremely bitter and severe fighting.'[27]

(iii)

See Maps 2, 5 *and* 7

The confidence with which the higher German commanders had awaited Allied attacks was quickly shaken when the attacks came.[28] There were several reasons for anxiety. There was the prolonged bombardment by the Allies' artillery which nevertheless gave no clue to the points which would be attacked because the fire seemed

Digitized by Google

to be directed against the whole front from Minturno to Mt Cassino. The Allies, on the face of it, were attacking simultaneously in at least four sectors of 14th Panzer Corps' and 51st Mountain Corps' fronts and seemed to be putting more than a division into each attack. The Allied air force added to the confusion by inflicting a great deal of damage upon several German headquarters during 12th and 13th May. Sixty-five Fortresses of M.A.S.A.F. dropped 145 tons of bombs on the headquarters of Army Group C at Mt Soratte (Pt 691), and sixty-nine others dropped 185 tons on *AOK 10* headquarters near Avezzano. The offices of *AOK 10's* Operations Branch were destroyed, as were all telephone lines, and the Advanced H.Q. had to move to Frosinone to share the accommodation of 14th Panzer Corps' headquarters, with what inconvenience can easily be imagined. Besides all this, Mitchells and Marauders heavily bombed the headquarters of 1st Parachute Division, of 44th Infantry Division, and of 15th Panzer Grenadier Division. The signal communications of all these headquarters were disrupted. Finally three important German officers were absent on duty or on leave: von Vietinghoff until 14th May, von Altenstadt (C.O.S. 14th Panzer Corps) until 15th May, and von Senger until 17th May.

The fog of war therefore was thick on the German side for the first twenty-four hours of the Allies' attack and persisted in patches for two days afterwards.[29] 14th Panzer Corps reported only once on 12th May, at 8.45 a.m., to *AOK 10* through its Operations staff officer, Major Oster. He said that so far as the Allies' main thrusts could be discerned, they seemed to be aimed at Mt Faito and S. Maria Infante. The enemy had crossed the Garigliano at several points, and 71st Infantry Division had repulsed attacks at Damiano (Pt 411) and Ventosa not far from the western side of Castelforte. 94th Infantry Division's front had not been penetrated to any great extent and Steinmetz still had a small reserve in hand. Oster believed that the events of the night indicated an operation to pin down 14th Panzer Corps rather than to break through it. As 12th May wore on fragments of information reached 14th Panzer Corps headquarters. Other French troops were reported (the report as we know was false) to have reached S. Andrea, where 131st Grenadier Regiment had lost ground. At the end of the day 94th Infantry Division was still holding its own but had committed its last reserve, as had 71st Infantry Division. At the headquarters of neither Division, nor at 14th Panzer Corps, was there as yet any clear idea of the identity and strength of their American and French assailants.

In contrast with 14th Panzer Corps, Feuerstein and his Divisional Commanders in 51st Mountain Corps saw their situation quite clearly.[30] By 4.30 a.m. on 12th May Feuerstein had decided that the

Digitized by Google

Allies' attacks on Mt Cassino and in the Liri valley marked the beginning of a big offensive. As the morning passed, the crossings by 4th Division and 8th Indian Division were recognised although these divisions had not been identified. Bode's 576th Grenadier Regiment seemed to be holding its own in the area of S. Angelo, although about 30 tanks were reported to have crossed the river south of the village, and ten more were said to be advancing from Pannacioni north-westward towards Massa Evangelista. 1st Parachute Division was standing firm and was counter-attacking at need, and in the evening Heidrich reported that he had repulsed all attacks. Ortner and his Divisional H.Q. (44th Infantry Division) were out of signal touch with Corps H.Q., almost certainly because of air attack. But Feuerstein had heard enough by other means to conclude that reinforcements were needed in the Liri valley. At 6.25 p.m. he ordered Colonel Schulz, Commander of 1st Parachute Regiment, to form at Aquino a strong Battle Group of four battalions, and detachments of the supporting arms.* Schulz's task was to iron out any penetration which had been made at and near S. Angelo. The Battle Group assembled during the night 12th/13th May and went into action on the morning of the 13th. Feuerstein also extracted five companies of infantry from his left flank to form a Corps reserve. The fighting during the 12th led him to decide that the sectors which included Mt Cassino, Cassino town, and the valley north of the Liri must be controlled by a single commander. Therefore at 8.50 p.m. on the 12th he placed Ortner's sector, north of the Liri, under Heidrich's command. Ortner remained as a fifth wheel on the coach for four days, perhaps usefully because Heidrich paid little attention to anyone except his own beloved Parachute Division.† Feuerstein's judgment in forming the Schulz Battle Group proved to have anticipated events when at midnight 12th/13th Ortner was at last able to get through to Corps by telephone to ask for reinforcements, and to say that without them he did not expect to stabilise his front.

Until von Vietinghoff returned to duty on 14th May, the headquarters of *AOK 10* had little to say for itself.[32] This was because it

---

* Schulz Battle Group:
1st and 2nd Battalions, 1st Parachute Regiment:
85th Reconnaissance Battalion (from 5th Mountain Division);
2nd Battalion 721st Jäger Regiment and 2nd Battalion 741st Jäger Regiment (both from 114th Jäger Division);
One battery, assault guns;
Two troops, field artillery;
One a/tk company.[31]
Almost from the day on which the Schulz Battle Group formed, its composition changed so often that it is impossible to record the changes.

† It is interesting that Feuerstein's view that the Cassino positions and the northern part of the Liri valley formed one block was the same as that which Hartmann had expressed when protesting against the decision to remove these sectors from the command of 14th Panzer Corps.

Digitized by Google

had been 'bombed out' on 12th May and did not establish a Forward H.Q. at Altepiano (between Subiaco and Guarcino) until 18th May. Moreover Major-General Wentzell, the Chief of Staff, had been left alone to 'mind the shop' because the Army Commander was expected to be away for a very short time. On the other hand Kesselring, from the very beginning of the battle, took tactical decisions at a level which to Allied eyes would seem thoroughly unsuitable for an Army Group Commander. In fact, it was not in Kesselring's nature to stand aloof from small issues or large, but in this instance he had made it impossible for himself to do so. He had done this by keeping three mobile divisions in his own hand as Army Group reserve, and by disposing them all to meet an assumed threat from the sea. As *OKW* reserve, the Hermann Göring Panzer Division was stationed near Leghorn to guard against landings as well as a possible breakout from the bridgehead. *AOK 10* had a potentially useful reserve in 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (15th Panzer Grenadier Division), but for some days this regiment too was kept near the coast and the few 'spare' units of 14th Panzer and 51st Mountain Corps were very soon committed to battle. On the evening of the 12th Hartmann asked that 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (90th Panzer Grenadier Division) should be sent forward to Pontecorvo and S. Oliva from the Sacco valley. Kesselring agreed, but stipulated that as landings from the sea were to be expected the regiment must not be sent into action until the direction of the Allies' main effort became clearer. In this respect he was badly served by his Intelligence staffs at every level. On 12th May the Allied front line formations were identified as 85th U.S. Division on Highway No. 7 and at the S. Martino hill; parts of 78th, 4th and 8th Indian Divisions at and south of S. Angelo; 3rd and 5th Polish Divisions between Highway No. 6 and Mt Cairo. 4th Moroccan Division alone had been identified among all the French troops. On the 13th the information was a little better. 88th U.S. Division had been added to the list. The French Expeditionary Corps was believed now to consist of the 2nd and 4th Moroccan Divisions, 3rd Algerian Division, and perhaps 1st French Division. The F.E.C's northern boundary was north of S. Ambrogio, separating it from 13th Corps. 8th Indian Division was placed at S. Angelo and 4th Division on its right. Behind the Indian Division stood 78th Division and the New Zealand Division, as well as strong, but unidentified armoured units.

The Polish Corps was placed correctly just north of Cassino with 10th and 5th Corps carrying the Allied front to the Adriatic coast.[33] The assumption of German Intelligence staffs, apparently shared by their commanders, was that the Allies held powerful reserves behind their front line formations. It is interesting, in passing, to

Digitized by Google

contrast this crude Intelligence work with the industry, skill, and flair of Alexander's exceptionally able Intelligence officers in forming their encyclopaedic knowledge of the German Order of Battle.

On 13th May Kesselring admitted to *OKW* that superior Allied forces, supported by numerous tanks and by artillery fire of unexampled fierceness, were attacking *AOK 10's* right wing with the object of tearing it apart. During the afternoon he agreed to move the remainder of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division from the Tiber to the Liri valley, and that two battalions of 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment might reinforce 71st Infantry Division. He refused however to allow 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and the artillery attached to it, to move forward from defending the coast between Gaeta and Terracina. He cannot be criticised for his hesitancy at this stage of the battle because it was too early for him to discern Alexander's intentions. The longer this deception-induced hesitancy lasted, the more disruptive the effects of Allied air supremacy and the more numerous the gaps torn in the German front. As the story of 'Diadem' unfolds we will be paying particular attention to Kesselring's movement and release of reserves. The first of the three mobile divisions held in Army Group reserve to start moving towards the battle area was 90th Panzer Grenadier Division.

(iv)

We turn again to 13th Corps, and first of all to 4th Division. The exertions of 10th and 28th Infantry Brigades in crossing the Gari and forming their shallow bridgehead, and in holding this against small but fierce counter-attacks had exhausted the troops. Ward, it will be remembered, gave orders that Amazon bridge must be built during the night 12th/13th May, and that on the 13th Heber-Percy's 12th Infantry Brigade and 17th/21st Lancers (61 Shermans, Mk III) would cross the river and carry the attack westwards. Accordingly 4th Division's three field companies of engineers, with a field squadron of 6th Armoured Division in reserve, set to work to build Amazon bridge under constant fire. By 5.30 a.m. on 13th May the bridge was open for traffic, and had cost the engineers 67 casualties.

At this point it may be well to tabulate the bridge-building in 13th Corps' sector instead of describing it bridge by bridge as each was built.[34] The fact that a bridge opened at a certain hour does not mean that it could be used uninterruptedly thereafter. Bridges were vulnerable, and were often closed for hours at a time by damage caused by shelling or by heavy traffic.

Digitized by Google

Bridge		Divisional Sector	Date and time of completion	Built by
Oxford Class 30	(a)	8th Indian Division	12th May 7.30 a.m.	66th Field Company Bengal S. & M.
Plymouth Class 30	(a)	8th Indian Division	12th May 10 a.m.	69th Field Company, Bengal S. & M.
Amazon Class 30	(a)	4th Division	13th May 5.30 a.m.	7th, 59th, 225th Field Companies R.E.
Congo Class 40	(a)	4th Division	14th May 9 a.m.	586th Field Company R.E. (Army Tps).
Blackwater Class 40	(a)	4th Division	14th May 11 p.m.	7th and 59th Field Companies R.E.
London Class 40	(a)	8th Indian Division	14th May 10.30 a.m.	577th Field Company R.E. (Corps Tps).
Edenbridge Class 40	(b)	8th Indian Division	14th May 5 p.m.	56th Field Company (Corps Tps).
Swindon Class 40	(b)	8th Indian Division	14th May 7 p.m.	12th Field Company R.C.E. (Canadian Corps).
Tonbridge Class 40	(b)	8th Indian Division	14th May 10 p.m.	56th Field Company R.E. (Corps Tps).

(a) Bridges provided for in 13th Corps' original plan.
(b) Additional bridges.

As soon as Amazon bridge opened a squadron of 17th/21st Lancers crossed, and by 8 a.m. 6th Black Watch and 2nd Royal Fusiliers crossed also and began to find and destroy German posts and snipers.[35] Heber-Percy intended to swing almost southward in a tank and infantry attack across the Pioppeto stream. This plan was spoiled when a bridging tank was destroyed and with it the possibility of passing tanks across the stream which was an excellent anti-tank ditch. Heber-Percy then ordered the attack to go in westwards to the Cassino–S. Angelo road, the Royal Fusiliers on the right directed on Pt 31, and the Black Watch on the left directed on Pt 33—a six-hundred yard front. Two squadrons of the 2nd Lothians and Border Horse supported the attack which went in on the heels of a barrage. The troops advanced very steadily and by noon the Royal Fusiliers had reached Pt 41 about fifteen hundred yards west of the river and the Black Watch, about a thousand yards to the south-west, had reached Pt 69 (Massa de Vivo).* The battalions had then accomplished their task and dug in. They had destroyed, with the help of fire from the tanks and artillery, a number of posts probably held by 1st and 3rd Battalions 115th Panzer

* The words *massa* or *masseria* (usually omitted on Map 7) mean a group of farm buildings; *casa* means a house, standing by itself. The name 'Massa de Vivo' occurs twice in this area, at Pt 69, and near Pt 50 twelve hundred yards to the north-east.

Digitized by Google

Grenadier Regiment. The Royal Fusiliers and the Black Watch however had merely begun the day's fighting. This was continued at 2 p.m. by 2nd D.C.L.I. (10th Infantry Brigade) on the right of the Royal Fusiliers, and by the Royal West Kents (12th Infantry Brigade) on the left of the Black Watch. These fresh attacks were supported, like the earlier ones, by artillery and tanks.

The D.C.L.I. and tanks from 17th/21st Lancers advanced quickly to Pt 63 and discovered that because several posts of the Parachute M.G. Battalion had been sited to cover Cassino town the occupants could be assailed from the rear.[38] The attack shattered the parachute battalion from which about one hundred prisoners were taken, while other survivors escaped south-west to the Cassino–Casa Varlese road. The Royal West Kents also advanced successfully for a mile along the north bank of the Pioppeto stream which one company crossed, occupying Casa Petracone until nightfall. The greatest success however was achieved by a third attack made by 2nd/4th Hampshires (on loan to 12th Infantry Brigade from 28th Infantry Brigade) supported by the Lothians and Border Horse.* The Hampshires followed the Pioppeto as far as Pt 33 on the Cassino–S. Angelo road, and then swung almost southward. By doing so they took in flank the German posts which faced the Gari and destroyed them one after another. Colonel Fowler-Esson decided that this was his battalion's day and led it unswervingly onwards until he reached Pts 50 and 46 a half-mile north of S. Angelo and inside 8th Indian Division's boundary.

On 13th May 4th Division most strikingly improved its situation. Five fresh battalions of infantry and two regiments of tanks had crossed the river and had enlarged most of the bridgehead to the depth of a mile.† All the anti-tank guns of the infantry had crossed the river, as had two troops of 14th Anti-Tank Regiment. The engineers were able to begin work on Congo and Blackwater bridges.

The day had been a hard one for the Germans and their reports reflect confusion and the splitting up of units. The Parachute M.G. Battalion, and the two battalions of 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment had begun to splinter although the stubbornness and fighting spirit of their men were very little impaired. At least a part of the Schulz Battle Group had been engaged with the Black Watch and 2nd/4th Hampshires, although it is not possible to

---

* The King's and the Somerset Light Infantry were withdrawn to the east of the Gari on the evening of 13th May to reorganise.

† 2nd Royal Fusiliers, 6th Black Watch, 1st Royal West Kents (all of 12th Infantry Brigade), 2nd D.C.L.I. (10th Infantry Brigade), 2nd/4th Hampshires (28th Infantry Brigade), 17th/21st Lancers, 2nd Lothians and Border Horse (both from 26th Armoured Brigade).

Digitized by Google

say that it was these actions which reduced 2nd Battalion 1st Parachute Regiment's fighting strength to eighteen. It is noteworthy that the Germans reported British tanks in places which no British tanks had reached. This tendency to see tanks everywhere persisted, and on 14th May Kesselring sharply rebuked *AOK 10* for its feeble and inadaptable anti-tank defence.[37] On the same day Feuerstein complained to von Vietinghoff that two hundred tanks at least were being used against his right wing, and was brusquely told that this wing was very well provided with anti-tank weapons and should be able to withstand armoured attack.* This was a counsel of perfection. Tanks had not played much of a part in the past winter's fighting because they could not move off the roads but now they were appearing all over the hard dry fields of the Liri valley as an unpleasant novelty. The German uneasiness was understandable, because infantry feel naked when tanks are at large unless, like 30th Corps at Medenine in March 1943, they know that an anti-tank defence has been planned to trap these intimidating machines.

We have yet to describe the fighting in the area of S. Angelo which developed from 8th Indian Division's attacks, but this and the results of 4th Division's advances caused Feuerstein to order a short withdrawal during the night 13th/14th May.[39] Bode (576th Grenadier Regiment) was to fall back to the line (south to north) Casa Silvestri–Casa Lena–Massa Vertechi. At Massa Vertechi Bode was to make contact with the right of the Schulz Battle Group which would hold the line of the Casa Varlese–Cassino road. This withdrawal meant that Ortner's troops would be holding what Feuerstein had to describe (on the 14th) as makeshift rallying lines. The next prepared positions were in the Hitler or Senger Line some six miles away to the west between Pontecorvo and Aquino.

12th Infantry Brigade's task on the 14th May was to advance to the Casa Varlese–Cassino road. During the small hours of the 14th 2nd/4th Hampshires moved forward, unopposed, to the line Casa Petracone–Casa Pegazzani. At 5 a.m. on 14th May 12th Infantry Brigade went into action with the Royal Fusiliers on the right, the Black Watch in the centre, and the Royal West Kents on the left. Tanks of the Lothians and Border Horse accompanied each battalion. The Royal Fusiliers passed from Pt 41 through heavy mortar and machine gun fire to their objective, and very soon after they reached the road the first of several counter-attacks came in and was repulsed. Shortly after 5 a.m. a dense mist blanketed

---

* On 13th May the German units between Highway 6 and the Liri held 27 anti-tank guns (7.5-cm) and 31 assault guns. British strength in tanks was:[38]

	Sherman	*Stuart*
17th/21st Lancers	60	8
2nd Lothians and Border Horse	61	10

Digitized by Google

the battlefield. In this murk, with visibility of a couple of yards, the Black Watch and two troops of tanks, abandoning tactical niceties, plunged forward on compass bearings all mixed up together. All but five tanks were trapped by obstacles which they had not been able to see, but at length—because the enemy's fire, though unaimed, was heavy and the advance was slow—the 'formidable mob' (as someone described it) crashed through a small wood and came out on their objective near Pt 76. Here the infantry dug in and spent the rest of the day in beating off small but determined counter-attacks. The Royal West Kents at first benefited from the misty cover but when it lifted found that they were enfiladed from Massa Vertechi on their left as well as being fired on from their front. Nevertheless the battalion gained ground yard by yard until it reached Pt 62, about six hundred yards east of the road.

Some little time after midday Ward decided that the enemy at Massa Vertechi must be eliminated, and gave this task to the Hampshires who had reverted to their own (28th) brigade. When the Hampshires' attack began, the Royal West Kents were to renew theirs. The Hampshires and the tanks with them had nearly a thousand yards to go to their objective and had also to cross the Pioppeto stream.

At 5.45 p.m. on 14th May the Hampshires and the tanks advanced behind a barrage.[40] The German fire was intense and it seemed that all their guns (some 270 in 51st Mountain Corps) were dropping salvoes of shells among the infantry in addition to the machine gun and mortar fire. A carrier, loaded with materials for a tank-bridge, was destroyed and the tanks therefore were unable to cross the Pioppeto. The infantry went on alone, but the scramble across the stream and the intense fire was robbing their attack of its drive. It was then that Captain R. Wakeford rallied the survivors of his Company ('B') and unfalteringly led them on. He was wounded in the face, both arms, and then both legs but wounds could not stop him, and his men and the rest of the Hampshires followed. Massa Vertechi was taken. For his valour in this action, and for equally determined leadership a day earlier, Wakeford was awarded the V.C. In this action the Hampshires lost the greater part of the 183 casualties which they suffered in the fighting since 12th May. The Royal West Kents also fought their way forward, with much loss, until they reached the road some distance north-east of Casa Varlese and on the left of the Black Watch. The left of 4th Division's bridgehead was now secure.

While 4th Division had been fighting its battles, the Corps Commander, Kirkman, had decided on the evening of the 13th

Digitized by Google

to commit 78th Division on the morning of the 14th.[41]* This fresh division was to cross by Oxford, Congo, and London bridges which Kirkman believed to be open when he issued his orders at 9.45 p.m. on 13th May. He was misinformed because at that time only Oxford was open.

On the morning of the 14th therefore not 78th Division but only 6th Inniskillings of 38th Infantry Brigade crossed the river. Brigadier Scott intended the Inniskillings to advance during the afternoon on the left of 12th Infantry Brigade through Massa Vendittis and Massa Tamburrini to Pt 86, near Casa Varlese, on the Cassino–Pignataro road. However he received conflicting accounts of the progress of 12th Infantry Brigade and it seemed rash to launch a single battalion into battle in such an uncertain situation. He therefore postponed the Inniskillings' venture until 15th May. During the 14th the remainder of 38th Infantry Brigade, most of 11th Infantry Brigade, and 26th Armoured Brigade, now under command of 78th Division, crossed the Gari.† A small independent group was formed consisting of 1st Derbyshire Yeomanry (the reconnaissance regiment of 6th Armoured Division) and 10th Rifle Brigade.

The delay in 78th Division's entry into battle was of less consequence than might have been expected because Leese at that moment was opening a new phase of his plan in response to the changing tactical situation. Before describing this we must follow 8th Indian Division's fortunes from 12th to 14th May.

In 17th Indian Infantry Brigade on 12th May, the Royal Fusiliers remained pinned down in their positions just west of the Gari because they were still enfiladed from the northern side of S. Angelo.[42] 1st/12th Frontier Force Regiment, south of S. Angelo, cleared the

---

* *78th Division* (*Major-General C. F. Keightley*). *Outline Order of Battle.*

11th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier R. K. Arbuthnott):
2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers, 1st Battalion East Surrey Regiment, 5th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment.

36th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier J. G. James):
5th Battalion The Buffs, 6th Battalion Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, 8th Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

38th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier T. P. D. Scott):
6th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion London Irish Rifles.

R.A.C. 56th Reconnaissance Regiment.

R.A. 17th, 132nd, 138th Field Regiments; 64th A/Tk Regiment; 49th L.A.A. Regiment.

R.E. 214th, 237th, 256th Field Companies; 281st Field Park Company.

M.G. 1st Battalion Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment.

† *26th Armoured Brigade* (Brigadier F. N. Mitchell): 16th/5th Lancers, 17th/21st Lancers, 2nd Lothians and Border Horse, 10th Battalion The Rifle Brigade.

Digitized by Google

enemy posts immediately facing it, and consolidated its positions on the line of the S. Angelo–S. Apollinare road. Early in the morning two companies of 5th Gurkhas attacked S. Angelo but were repulsed by 1st Battalion 576th Grenadier Regiment. Thereafter the whole of 5th Gurkhas became so much mixed up with the Frontier Force Regiment that a second attack could not be staged for the time being. Towards 6 p.m. however a company of the Gurkhas, supported by tanks of the Ontario Regiment, attacked S. Angelo once more and penetrated a little way before being brought to a standstill. The tanks of both the Ontario and Calgary Regiments were greatly impeded during the day by the marshy ground on the river bank and by numerous scattered mines. At the failure of the Gurkhas' second improvised attack, Brigadier Boucher decided to undertake a set-piece operation against S. Angelo on 13th May.

In 19th Indian Infantry Brigade 3rd/8th Punjab, supported by tanks of the Calgary Regiment, pushed forward some five hundred yards and then dug in a little beyond the S. Angelo–S. Apollinare road. The battalion was helped by a company of 5th/13th Frontier Force Rifles which had crossed the river during the night. On the 3rd/8th Punjab's left the five platoons of Argylls remained pinned down. After dark on the 12th they were withdrawn east of the river in order that the battalion might reorganise for operations which Brigadier Dobree had decided that it would carry out on the 14th.

On the German side little information about the day's fighting reached Ortner's headquarters. The impression there was that 576th Grenadier Regiment was holding its own but that its casualties were heavy.

By the morning of the 13th the village of S. Angelo had been pounded into rubble, but it was clear that the Germans remained ensconced in the ruins, and were full of fight. At about noon 1st/5th Gurkhas, supported by seven field regiments of artillery and tanks of the Ontario Regiment, attacked. This time the Gurkhas broke into the village and ferreted the Germans out of machine gun nests and foxholes with grenades, kukris, and bullets. By 3 p.m. S. Angelo had been taken and the Gurkhas went on to storm the position north-east of the village from which the Royal Fusiliers had been enfiladed.* The Royal Fusiliers then advanced a thousand yards to Colle Romano, and 1st/12th Frontier Force Regiment, south of S. Angelo, advanced the same distance to Casa Vittiglio. In this manner 17th Indian Infantry Brigade won its part of 8th Indian Division's second objective.

19th Indian Infantry Brigade's task for 13th May was to advance westward for half a mile to a line drawn north to south through

* The Gurkhas' casualties were 41 killed and 129 wounded.

Digitized by Google

Casa Mandrini, and then swing southward to capture Panaccioni. 6th/13th Frontier Force Rifles, with a small reinforcement from 3rd/8th Punjab, and with tanks of the Calgary Regiment closely co-operating in a well-practised battle-drill, spent the day in stalking and crushing posts of 576th Grenadier Regiment and 305th Füsilier Battalion. The country was very close and overgrown and was seamed with sunken lanes, so that it was a day of many small disconnected fights. By 7 p.m. however the westward advance had been completed, Panaccioni had been captured, and 80 prisoners had been taken. Brigadier Dobree postponed the clearance of the Liri Appendix until 14th May. Once again little information about the fighting in the southern part of Bode's sector was received at German divisional and corps headquarters. The loss of Panaccioni was reported, and 1st Battalion 576th Grenadier Regiment was said to be cut off in S. Angelo. An incorrect report stated that British tanks were about a kilometre east of Pignataro. As we have already noticed, Bode was ordered to withdraw during the night 13th/14th to the line Casa Silvestri–Casa Lena–Massa Vertechi.

During 13th May Russell decided to use part of his reserve, 21st Indian Infantry Brigade, to help in the operations which were planned for 78th and 4th Divisions on 14th May. He detailed a force, consisting of 3rd/15th Punjab Regiment, detachments of 5th Mahratta Anti-Tank Regiment, of 5th Mahratta M.G. Battalion and of the Three Rivers Regiment, to strike north-west through Casa D'Alessandro, and to cut the Pignataro–Cassino road a little over a mile north of Pignataro. The route traversed the ridges of the S. Angelo 'Horseshoe' which were covered with closely-set vineyards and thickets of scrub oak and pierced by sunken lanes. The rough country, the determined resistance of Bode's troops, in particular the anti-tank gunners, and the fact that 3rd/15th Punjab and the Three Rivers Regiment had not trained together, made slow work of the day's fighting on the 14th. Nevertheless by nightfall the infantry and tanks had reached Massa Evangelista, about half-way to the final objective. During the day the Argylls cleared the tongue of land between the Gari and the Liri.

General Leese had intended the Polish Corps to attack Monastery Hill again on 15th May, but during the 13th and 14th the tactical situation was plainly changing.[43] 1st Parachute Division held fast to Mt Cassino, but the jumble of units under what amounted to the joint command of Heidrich and Ortner between Highway 6 and the Liri was being prised from its positions. Moreover on 5th Army's front the French Expeditionary Corps and 2nd U.S. Corps were driving wedges into 14th Panzer Corps' sector. Instead of the

Digitized by Google

possession of Monastery Hill being the prerequisite of 13th Corps' advance in the Liri valley, as Leese and everyone else had thought, the situation now seemed to be the other way round. The smoking of Mt Cassino and of the bridges over the Gari was highly successful and enabled 8th Army to operate in the Liri valley free from closely observed artillery fire. If 13th Corps pressed strongly onwards in the Liri valley, Monastery Hill would be isolated and might the more easily fall. Leese decided to postpone yet again the Polish Corps' attack, and ordered Kirkman to press hard with 78th Division. If we anticipate our story a little we can complete the account of Leese's intentions by remarking that on the evening of the 15th he ordered General Burns to begin to commit the Canadian Corps on the 16th by passing through 8th Indian Division and advancing in the southern part of the Liri valley.

Kirkman and Keightley had been expecting Leese's order and the plan for 78th Division was quickly made. On 15th May the division was to advance north and north-west, with 11th Infantry Brigade (Arbuthnott) on the right and 38th Infantry Brigade (Scott) on the left, from a 1,500-yard Start Line which was the Cassino–Pignataro road a little north of Casa Varlese. The Division's final objective was the railway line just north of Casa di Fava and Casa Tarquinio, and thence to a point south-west of Piumarola. The total distance of the advance would be a little more than 3,000 yards and four 'Report Lines' were fixed for purposes of control.* The Derbyshire Yeomanry Group was to move astride the Pioppeto stream, and to cover 78th Division's left flank. 4th Division was, for the time being, to consolidate its positions and to be the firm base of 78th Division's advance.

Before continuing with the operations of 13th Corps on 15th and 16th May, an outline must be given of the situation in Feuerstein's 51st Mountain Corps, greatly simplified because the detail of the actions of the various German commanders is very complicated. First comes a change in the organization of command. On 13th May Kesselring had decided to bring forward the larger, uncommitted part of Baade's 90th Panzer Grenadier Division from the Tiber estuary to the Liri valley, and that Baade was to take command of the sector between Highway 6 and the Liri from Ortner and

---

* The Report Lines were:

Grafton:	the Start Line;
Pytchley:	1,000 yards beyond Grafton;
Fernie:	very nearly as far as the Cassino–Piumarola road; 2,000 yards from the Start Line;
Bedale:	the final objective.

Digitized by Google

Heidrich.*[44] These units received marching orders from Army Group late on 13th May, but after they had reached Frosinone on the 14th their onward journey was much impeded by the Allies' air attack on the approach routes. Thus Baade's troops reached the front piecemeal, the first unit to arrive being 1st Battalion, 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment which was sent to Pignataro to join Battle Group Schulz. Having learnt from Feuerstein that his task was to protect 51st Mountain Corps' southern flank and to keep contact with 14th Panzer Corps, Baade established his headquarters at Aquino on 16th May and took over his sector at 8 a.m. Ortner was ordered to prepare the Hitler Line for defence.

Meanwhile at 6 p.m. on 14th May Ortner had sent an appreciation to Feuerstein. He complimented 576th Grenadier Regiment on a brave fight but declared that its casualties had been so high, particularly in its supporting anti-tank and assault guns, that it could no longer hold a connected front. When the British guessed this, as assuredly they would, they would abandon their cautious and methodical tactics for something much more thrusting. He advised an immediate retreat to the Hitler Line not later than the night 15th/16th May. Neither von Vietinghoff nor Feuerstein took notice of Ortner's advice because of the imminent arrival of Baade. However on the 14th Feuerstein assembled a new Straffner Battle Group, and ordered it into the Hitler Line to come under Ortner's command.† Facing 13th Corps, the Schulz Battle Group and 576th Grenadier Regiment were holding fast to the line of the Cassino–Pignataro road as far as Pt 86 (Casa Varlese) and thence to Massa di Fazio–Casa Manetta–Casa Murro.

On 15th May Keightley's plan did not turn out quite as he had expected because the Schulz Battle Group, which had absorbed 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, was holding on to the Cassino–Pignataro road.[45] This road had been chosen as 78th Division's Start Line in the belief that the enemy was not holding it. The Start Line therefore had to be captured as a preliminary for the Division's attack. The floor of the Liri valley was criss-crossed by hedges, walls, and ditches; vines and trees were in leaf, and grass

---

* Baade's troops were:

361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment (three battalions)
190th Panzer Jäger Abteilung
Reconnaissance battalion
Engineer battalion
190th Panzer Abteilung (30 assault guns)
One field battery.

† The Straffner Battle Group consisted of three companies drawn from 5th Mountain Division's 85th and 100th Mountain Regiments, a battalion of Construction Engineers, and a 'Panther Turret Company'. The last unit manned Panther tank-turrets which had been mounted on concrete bases. 44th Infantry Division's Replacement Battalion also was sent into the Hitler Line.

Digitized by Google

and crops were high. Ground-mist and smoke brought visibility down to five hundred yards or so. All these conditions favoured the defence and made progress slow. At 10.30 a.m. the Royal West Kents (12th Infantry Brigade of 4th Division), supported by 19th New Zealand Armoured Regiment, attacked Pt 86 but could not take it. The Inniskillings (38th Infantry Brigade) and a squadron of 16th/5th Lancers had a hard fight for Massa Tamburrini, captured it, and went on to take Pt 86 at about noon. In 11th Infantry Brigade the 5th Northamptons, warned by the Inniskillings' stiff fight, staged a set-piece attack to reach the Cassino–Pignataro road on the Inniskillings' right. This attack began at 4 p.m. and succeeded. The day however was now far advanced, and of 11th Infantry Brigade's remaining battalions, 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers were only a short distance west of the Gari and 1st East Surreys had still to cross. The delays in concentrating 78th Division were caused by traffic which broke down the approaches to the bridges, by continual shelling, and by the mines which the Germans had sown west of the river. Keightley therefore decided to postpone his full divisional attack until 9 a.m. on 16th May, and in consequence Leese postponed the Polish Corps' attack on Monastery Hill for the third time.

German accounts of the fighting on the 15th show some confusion.[46] Heidrich reported that the Schulz Battle Group had repulsed 'hordes' of tanks during the afternoon, but that others had almost reached Pt 86, and yet others the area Casa Giorgio, which cannot have been true. Higher German headquarters noted that 576th Grenadier Regiment had been badly mauled and that 1st Parachute Regiment had been almost annihilated.

On 16th May the Lancashire Fusiliers and a squadron of 16th/5th Lancers on the right, and on the left the London Irish (38th Infantry Brigade) and a squadron of 17th/21st Lancers renewed the attack to clear the Cassino–Pignataro road. Seven field regiments of artillery supported the infantry and the tanks. The 'going' was not easy across ridges and hummocks and among farm buildings, and the Germans fought stubbornly and often made local counter-attacks. During one of these counter-attacks two German assault guns, or possibly Pzkw IV tanks, bore down upon the leading company of the Lancashire Fusiliers. These Goliaths then met their David in Fusilier F. A. Jefferson who seized a Piat and, leaping from cover to get a clear view, attacked the vehicles.*[47] He set one alight with a bomb, and drove off the other, and for his valour he was awarded the V.C. By noon the Lancashire Fusiliers and the London

* The Piat (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) was a rather capricious weapon which threw an anti-tank bomb a short distance.

Digitized by Google

Irish had reached the Pytchley Report Line. During the day the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshires (10th Infantry Brigade) and the Royal West Kents hammered flat a German salient between Casa Matronola and Casa Gigante.

In 8th Indian Division the three brigades and tanks of the Ontario, Three Rivers, and Calgary Regiments pressed westwards during the 15th, and 6th/13th Frontier Force Rifles captured Pignataro at 11 p.m.[48] 8th Indian Division had now completed its tasks and on the morning of the 16th the Canadian 1st Infantry Brigade took up the advance westwards from Pignataro. By the same evening 1st Canadian Division had relieved the Indian Division.

On 16th May at 11 p.m. Alexander signalled to Sir Alan Brooke:

> 'The battle is progressing steadily forward . . . We can now claim that we have definitely broken the Gustav Line. But it is certain that we shall have to stage a full scale offensive against the Adolf Hitler Line which will be held to the last by all German elements available. Before this attack can be developed it will necessitate moving our artillery forward . . .'[49]

He was taking into account the success of the French Expeditionary Corps and of 2nd U.S. Corps as well as that of 13th Corps. In summary for the moment the French Corps, by the end of 16th May, had advanced to S. Giorgio, had cleared the Ausonia defile and was threatening Esperia, and had taken Mt Revole, about four miles east of the Itri–Pico road, in the wilderness of the Aurunci mountains.[50] 2nd U.S. Corps had taken Castellonorato and, north of it Mt S. Angelo, and was advancing on Formia.

What now of the German side? By the evening of 16th May von Vietinghoff and Kesselring agreed that in 51st Mountain Corps' sector a mile-wide gap had been torn between the right flank of 1st Parachute Division and the left flank of Baade's troops.[51] On the right flank of *AOK 10* the advances of the French Expeditionary Corps and of 2nd U.S. Corps were threatening to cut the important lateral road Formia–Itri–Pico. Moreover German Intelligence had identified the Canadian Division, an addition which raised the German count of Allied divisions in action to eleven. von Vietinghoff and von Mackensen were nervous also of outflanking landings south or north of the Anzio beachhead. A review of the threatening situation led Kesselring to agree with von Vietinghoff's suggestion that *AOK 10* must begin to withdraw to the Hitler Line, moving during three successive nights and through three delaying lines. 'Then we shall have to give up Cassino?' asked Kesselring, and von

Digitized by Google

Vietinghoff replied 'Yes'. In this fashion the fate of this famous position, soaked with the blood of so many soldiers, was settled. Cassino's fall from being a position of pre-eminent tactical value was sudden, but there is no doubt that the senior German commanders now believed that the most important tactical object was to prevent the Allies from breaking through in the Liri valley.

Kesselring's search for reinforcements continued.[52] By 15th May he had acted to reinforce *AOK 10* by ordering 305th and 334th Infantry Divisions over from the Adriatic front, replacing them there by 278th Infantry Division of *Armeegruppe von Zangen* from Istria.* Nearer at hand, Kesselring agreed on the 16th to move the bulk of 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (15th Panzer Grenadier Division) from coast-defence between Gaeta and Terracina to the area Pico–Esperia. The same day he ordered 1st Battalion 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (26th Panzer Division) to Fondi, and on the 17th ordered the remainder of the regiment to Pico, and the division's Reconnaissance Battalion to Fondi. We shall now look a little ahead in order to round off the account of Kesselring's actions at this stage of the battle. After conferring with von Vietinghoff and von Mackensen on 18th May he decided to reinforce 14th Panzer Corps with the whole of 26th Panzer Division, but dismissed von Mackensen's suggestion that a regiment of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division should be brought down from Lake Bracciano to strengthen *AOK 14*. von Mackensen argued with some reason that if the Allies penetrated his Army's positions the consequences would be more serious than any which might arise from *AOK 10's* fighting withdrawal, but this argument did not deter Kesselring from ordering *AOK 14* to cede 1st Battalion 4th Panzer Regiment (Panthers) and 56th Werfer Regiment to 51st Mountain Corps. On the other hand he decided to remove 90th Panzer Grenadier Division from Feuerstein's command and to give it to 14th Panzer Corps because this formation's need seemed now to be the greater.† In addition he gave 1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and 60th Engineer Battalion to 14th Panzer Corps from *AOK 14*.

Thus, by 18th May, Kesselring had started his first major moves to counter Alexander's offensive. He had ordered the commitment of a second reserve mobile division, 26th Panzer Division, to the Liri valley, and had begun stripping the quiet Adriatic sector, but he had not moved 29th Panzer Grenadier and 26th Panzer Divisions into *AOK 14's* sector. In spite of von Mackensen's plea for reinforce-

* As all these movements were delayed and protracted by air damage 305th Infantry Division did not take command of a battle sector until 23rd May, and by 27th May only two-thirds of 334th Infantry Division had been relieved by 278th Infantry Division.

† 90th Panzer Grenadier Division was under command of 14th Panzer Corps during 19th and 20th, and part of 21st May. It then reverted to 51st Mountain Corps.[53]

Digitized by Google

ment in case 6th U.S. Corps should attempt a breakout, 29th Panzer Grenadier Division was kept coast-watching until 20th May. Where the *OKW* reserve was concerned, Jodl proposed on 18th May that provided Kesselring received a replacement for defence of the Ligurian coast, the Hermann Göring Panzer Division could move to the Rome area as a long-stop for *AOK 14*.[54] As the suggested replacement was to come from Denmark (20th *Luftwaffe* Field Division—see start of Chapter IV) Hitler hesitated before sanctioning the proposal on 22nd May; we shall see in Chapter V that the Hermann Göring Panzer Division began to move south the next day.

When Alexander's offensive opened, Hitler's Operations and Intelligence staffs became markedly uneasy. The general opinion seemed to be that the attack on *AOK 10* was a prelude to operations against *AOK 14* at Anzio coupled with large landings at more northern points on the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea.[55] The forces which the Allies would use in these operations were the groups of formations which were believed to be standing by in North Africa and at Naples. The belief that a 'Naples Group' existed began to fade by 18th May because its supposed formations had mostly been identified elsewhere, but the belief in uncommitted formations stationed in North Africa persisted. The result of these rather vague fears was agreement that Italy must be reinforced, but the first move occurred because it seemed that Istria would be too weakly garrisoned when 278th Infantry Division moved from the peninsula to the Adriatic coast of Italy to replace 305th and 334th Infantry Divisions which Kesselring had decided to move to the battlefield.* Hitler therefore directed, on 16th May, that a regiment and two battalions of the Brandenburg Division were to move to Istria from Hungary and the Eastern Front respectively. On the 18th he also decreed that 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division and an SS demonstration unit were to transfer from Hungary to northern Italy, where they began to arrive on 22nd/23rd May. And so the German High Command started to reinforce Italy, the very thing which Wilson and Alexander were hoping would be one result of their offensive.

By the close of 16th May 13th Corps had won a bridgehead some three miles deep at the cost of about 4,000 casualties.[56] On the same day Baade took over command of the sector between Highway 6 and

* The removal of 278th Infantry Division would leave only 188th Reserve Division and miscellaneous units in Istria.

Digitized by Google

the Liri and of a miscellaneous collection of units.* During 16th May 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade, supported by tanks, advanced westwards as far as Massa Termine, and 78th Division advanced about a thousand yards westwards from the Cassino–Pignataro road. The Schulz Battle Group was now occupying Piumarola, but there was an unpleasant gap between this place and Casa Sinagoga, and only the remnants of the Bode Blocking Group held hastily occupied positions between Massa Termine and Pontecorvo. Feuerstein directed that the line to be held in the Liri valley on 17th May would run from Ponte a Cavallo in the north, through Piumarola, to Piana di Ravano on the river bank. Heidrich's 1st Parachute Division seemed to be standing firm in Cassino town, on Monastery Hill and on the hills north-west of it.

General Leese had already issued, on the evening of 15th May, his operation instruction for the next phase of the battle.[58] He intended to complete the isolation of Cassino and Monastery Hill and to clear and open Highway 6; to continue to advance on a two-Corps front; and to regroup to allow 13th Corps to rest and refit some of its formations. On his order 13th Corps was to cut Highway 6 a little north of Ponte a Cavallo, and the Polish Corps was to attack the Cassino positions and then join hands with 13th Corps. The Canadian Corps was to advance westward in the southern part of the Liri valley and 13th Corps was to do likewise in the northern part. At 10.35 p.m. on 16th May Leese confirmed that the next phase for 13th Corps and the Polish Corps would begin on the 17th: 13th Corps to advance to a line hinged on the railway, right to left, Casa di Fava–Casa Tarquinio–Piumarola; the Polish Corps to attack the Cassino positions. Both Corps were to begin their attacks at 7 a.m.[59]

See Maps 7 and 8

In 13th Corps 78th Division resumed the attack on the 17th, advancing with 11th Infantry Brigade on the right and 38th Infantry Brigade on the left. The hardest fighting of the day fell to 6th Inniskillings, a squadron of 16th/5th Lancers, and a squadron of the Lothians and Border Horse. This was in taking Piumarola, '. . . an afternoon and evening of confused fighting, with the tanks cramped

* Baade had from his own 90th Panzer Grenadier Division: 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 190th Artillery Regiment, the engineer battalion, 190th Panzer Abteilung (assault guns) en route from Arce, the reconnaissance battalion near Pignataro.[57] He also had the remnants of Bode's Blocking Group, some artillery from 44th and 305th Infantry Divisions, and 71st Werfer Regiment. He expected to receive during the 16th a troop of 8.8-cm A.A. guns, an a/tk company from 114th Jäger Division, and 12 Pzkw IV tanks from 26th Panzer Division.

Digitized by Google

in a sunken lane and the infantrymen playing a lethal game of hide-and-seek in the houses and the rubble-strewn streets.'* By 8 p.m. however the Schulz Battle Group had withdrawn, leaving many prisoners in British hands. In the south of 51st Mountain Corps' sector, the Germans were also in trouble on the Piana di Ravano.[60] Here French troops, as will be described later, crossed the Liri from the south, reaching Casa Bevilacqua, encircling 90th Panzer Grenadier Division's Reconnaissance Battalion and the Straffner Battle Group. Further north the Canadians were advancing towards Ponte Fraiola. Feuerstein's report described the day as one 'of heavy fighting in its hardest form', and casualties were heavy.† So much for the floor of the Liri valley. We turn now to the Cassino heights.

Before the pressures built up on 16th May von Vietinghoff had described Cassino as a 'beacon', and it was perhaps for this reason that when Feuerstein ordered Heidrich to withdraw during the night 16th/17th he added that he might continue to hold the Abbey provided that he incurred no casualties in so doing. Heidrich was in no hurry to leave his beacon; according to von Vietinghoff he proposed, on the evening of 17th May, to hold on for two more days. He was then ordered to withdraw forthwith because his four parachute battalions were needed to bolster up 90th Panzer Grenadier Division's exhausted and weakened units in the Hitler Line. But this is to anticipate.

During the four days which passed between the Polish Corps' first and second attacks the Poles reorganized, in particular 5th Kresowa Division in which three battalions could muster no more than three companies each.[61] The Poles nevertheless patrolled constantly by night, and arranged shoots by artillery and machine guns in the hope of provoking the Germans into replying, thereby disclosing their defensive fire plans. On 14th May 4th Polish Armoured Regiment made a sortie against the gorge which led to Albaneta Farm. During the sortie Polish engineers lifted a large number of mines, and thereafter tanks watched the area to prevent the Germans from relaying their minefield.

Constant reconnaissance had given the Polish commanders an interesting picture of the layout of Heidrich's defences. They believed that two 'rings' existed. The northern ring included

---

* Ray: *Algiers to Austria* (*op. cit.*) p. 132.

† At the end of 17th May the fighting strengths of some German units were:

	Officers	*Men*
576th Grenadier Regiment	13	210
1st Battalion, 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment	6	50
2nd " " " " "	12	160
3rd " " " " "	10	80
3rd Parachute Regiment (18th May)	180 in all	

Digitized by Google

(moving anti-clockwise) Pt 593—Phantom Ridge–Colle S. Angelo–Pt 575–Pt 505–Albaneta Farm. The southern ring included D'Onifrio Ridge–Pt 569–Monastery Hill. The German strongpoints were sited on the circumference of each ring and could cover each other and the ground within the rings by fire. Attacking troops therefore would gain very little by capturing a small part of a ring. One or two German strongpoints might be destroyed but the others would prevent the attackers from penetrating more deeply or from fanning out from their breach. Moreover dead ground inside the rings harboured local reserves for the Germans' favourite immediate counter-attacks. It is hard to convey how quick and vicious these could be. The Polish commanders believed that they must capture at least half a ring in the first assault if they were to break the whole ring by further attacks. But the nature of the ground restricted the frontage of an attack to much less than half a ring. It was a most difficult tactical puzzle.

Anders decided that, as before, 5th Kresowa Division would attack on the right and 3rd Carpathian Division on the left.[62] 5th Kresowa Division's attack was to be made by a specially organized Group under command of Colonel Rudnicki, the Deputy Divisional Commander. The Group was composed of:

5th Wilenska Infantry Brigade (Colonel Kurek):
13th and 15th Wilenska Rifle Battalions.
6th Lwowska Infantry Brigade (Colonel Sawicki):
16th, 17th, 18th Lwowska Rifle Battalions.
Polish Commando.
Detachments, 15th Poznanski Reconnaissance Regiment.
3rd Squadron, 4th Polish Armoured Regiment.

The infantry were to attack in waves, a battalion in each wave, to capture in succession the northern part of Phantom Ridge, Colle S. Angelo (a northern hump known as Little S. Angelo, and a southern, somewhat higher hump known as Angelo) and Pt 575. In more detail, 16th Lwowska Battalion was to capture Phantom Ridge, while the tanks protected its left flank. Next 17th Lwowska Rifle Battalion would pass through to capture Colle S. Angelo, its right flank being protected by the Polish Commando. Then 15th Wilenska Rifle Battalion would capture Pt 575. 13th Wilenska Rifle Battalion would help in taking Pt 575, or would exploit success. 18th Lwowska Rifle Battalion was in reserve. The attack was to begin at 7 a.m. on 17th May and was to be preceded by a twenty-minute counter-battery and counter-mortar shoot by the Corps' artillery, followed by forty minutes of concentrations on the German positions. The plan was brutally simple and resembled the storming of a breach in eighteenth century warfare.

Digitized by Google

In 3rd Carpathian Division Lieutenant-Colonel Szynanksi's 2nd Carpathian Rifle Brigade and 2nd Squadron 4th Polish Armoured Regiment was chosen to attack. The Albaneta Farm and Pt 593 seemed to be the German key positions. Part of 6th Carpathian Rifle Battalion was to capture the gorge leading to Albaneta Farm and the tanks were then to pass through and engage the farm and Pt 593 by fire. As soon as the Kresowa Division had captured Colle S. Angelo, thereby saving 2nd Carpathian Rifle Brigade from being raked by fire, 6th Battalion was to capture Albaneta Farm. Thereafter 4th Carpathian Rifle Battalion was to capture in succession Pts 593, 569, and 476. 5th Carpathian Rifle Battalion and one battalion from 1st Carpathian Rifle Brigade were in reserve. After the capture of Pts 593, 569, and 476 the task of the reserve would probably be to bypass the Abbey and gain contact with 13th Corps' troops on Highway 6 at, and east of, Casa Covacece (see inset on *Map 8*). The Carpathian Division would begin its attack at 7 a.m. on 17th May and the programme of artillery support would be like that of 5th Kresowa Division.

5th Kresowa Division's attack was preceded by an unexpected success.[63] During the night 16th/17th May a company of 16th Lwowska Rifle Battalion, sent to reconnoitre Phantom Ridge, captured a number of posts of 3rd Parachute Regiment on the northern parts of the ridge. The Polish battalion's Commanding Officer at once sent other companies forward and by 11 p.m. on the 16th the whole battalion was securely posted on Phantom Ridge, the Division's first objective. At 7.10 a.m. on the 17th, therefore, 17th Lwowska Battalion attacked Colle S. Angelo, which it captured very quickly. The Germans retaliated as quickly. A storm of shells and mortar bombs fell on the 17th Battalion, and the Germans counter-attacked twice. The fighting was vicious and by 2 p.m. the Poles were running short of ammunition, because their ammunition-porters had been decimated by German defensive fire during the morning's advance. A third German counter-attack recaptured Angelo, the hill's southern hummock. And so 15th Wilenska Rifle Battalion, instead of attacking Pt 575, had with 16th Battalion to join 17th in a concerted attack to recapture Angelo. By 6 p.m. this attack succeeded. The day's fighting had been fiercer and the Polish casualties much heavier than these bald sentences suggest, and when Angelo had been re-taken the Kresowa Division could do no more than consolidate, mop up, and send patrols forward.

In 3rd Carpathian Division 6th Carpathian Rifle Battalion, the tanks, and a detachment of engineers, punctually began the very hazardous task of clearing the gorge leading to Albaneta Farm.[64] Ground had to be gained almost yard by yard and detecting and lifting mines was, as always, a very slow business. The attackers were,

Digitized by Google

moreover, galled by fire from Pt 575 from which the Kresowa Division had been diverted to Angelo. After a couple of hours' fighting General Duch decided that he could not wait for the Albaneta Farm to be taken or neutralized before launching 4th Carpathian Rifle Battalion against Pt 593. The battalion attacked at 9.23 a.m. and was at once counter-attacked from the D'Onifrio Ridge and Pt 476. At about 11.30 a.m. 4th Carpathian Rifle Battalion gained Pt 593, but the Germans counter-attacked repeatedly and the feature changed hands several times. At last, at 2.30 p.m., 4th Carpathian Battalion and part of the 5th, supported by the whole divisional artillery, again attacked Pt. 593. The German posts resisted furiously, and the Poles succeeded in taking only a part of the feature. They could do no more, dug in where they stood, and held fast. Meanwhile 6th Carpathian Battalion and the 3rd Squadron had fought their way to within less than two hundred yards distance of Albaneta Farm.

Anders issued fresh orders at 9 p.m. on the 17th. The Kresowa and Carpathian Divisions were to hold the ground which they had won, to reorganize, and to patrol. On the 18th the Kresowa Division was to capture Pt 575 and the Carpathian Division was to capture Albaneta Farm.

We have seen however that 1st Parachute Division was withdrawing reluctantly from the position which it had held since 25th February. At dawn on the 18th patrols of 6th Carpathian Rifle Battalion found the Albaneta Farm deserted, and at the same time the 4th Carpathian Battalion again attacked Pt 593, cleared it by 7 a.m. and went on to clear Pt 569 by 10 a.m. Meanwhile no fire had come from the Abbey and at 10.20 a.m., or a little before, a patrol of 12th Podolski Reconnaissance Regiment entered, accepted the surrender of thirty Germans, and hoisted the Polish standard. Somewhat later a very 'unofficial' British patrol consisting of Major Thomas and Fusilier Barden of 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers (12th Infantry Brigade) entered and made the first contact between 13th Corps and the Polish Corps.[65] Fighting however was not yet ended in the Carpathian Division's sector. Scattered German posts had to be mopped up, a business which was completed by about 2 p.m. At 4 p.m. a patrol of 5th Carpathian Rifle Battalion met British troops at Pt 58 on Highway 6.

In 5th Kresowa Division's sector the last German troops were stubborn, either from pride or because they had not received orders to withdraw. Improvised units of the Rudnicki Group mopped up Colle S. Angelo, but the last defenders of Pt 575 held out in their lairs among the rocks and crevices of that steep hill. Meanwhile Polish units bypassed the hill, clearing its western slopes and moving on towards Villa S. Lucia. Here too scattered, sharp fighting

Digitized by Google

occurred, and it was not until dawn on 19th May that resistance ceased.

Thus ended what we may call the Fourth and Fifth Battles of Mt Cassino. They had cost the Polish Corps 3,779 casualties, including those suffered in clearing Mt Corno and Piedimonte, that is up to 25th May. We do not know the total German casualties but 900 unburied dead were counted. Many more must have been buried by the Germans and the wounded would have been evacuated.

On 17th May von Vietinghoff's orders for 51st Mountain Corps were that it would retreat during the night 17th/18th to a line (from north to south) Piedimonte–Ponte di Castelluccio—a marked bend in the River Liri's course south of Pontecorvo.[66] The newly arrived engineer battalions of 305th and 334th Infantry Divisions were hastily sent to improve the anti-tank defences of Pontecorvo. 1st Parachute Division and 90th Panzer Grenadier Division were to make contact at Casa Caprara. The withdrawal was everywhere followed up by the Polish, British, and Canadian troops. Heidrich admitted on the 18th that he could have avoided the final battle of Cassino if he had not clung to his positions for the sake of prestige. Feuerstein's Chief of Staff, von Klinckowström, reported that Baade's troops were worn out. Yet when von Vietinghoff reported that 51st Mountain Corps was taking up well-prepared positions, Kesselring remarked 'Then we need not be too anxious' and turned most of his attention to the troubles of 14th Panzer Corps. On 18th May the approximate deployment of 51st Mountain Corps was: on the right the remains of Bode's Battle Group (576th Grenadier Regiment), the Straffner Battle Group, and part of 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment which formed the Fabian Battle Group. On the left of these Battle Groups stood 1st Parachute Division, having on its right the Heilmann Battle Group formed of 1st and 2nd Battalions 3rd Parachute Regiment, 4th Parachute Regiment, 1st Battalion 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and 1st Battalion 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. On Heilmann's left was the Schulz Battle Group now composed of 2nd Battalion 721st Jäger Regiment, 2nd Battalion 741st Jäger Regiment, 5th Mountain Division's Reconnaissance Battalion, a few companies of engineers and a battery of assault guns. On the left of Schulz, and also under command of 1st Parachute Division, were Battle Group von Ruffin (4th Alpine Battalion and 2nd Battalion, 100th Mountain Regiment) and 132nd Grenadier Regiment of 44th Infantry Division. North of Mt Castellone was Schrank's 5th Mountain Division and attached 134th Grenadier Regiment, also of 44th Infantry Division. Feuerstein expected that heavy fighting would again break out in the Liri

Digitized by Google

valley within a few hours. His part of the Hitler Line was held by troops who were either very tired or were reinforcement units and details without experience in battle. He doubted whether he would be able to repulse determined Allied attacks unless he received substantial reinforcements of tanks.

(v)

See Map 5

While 8th Army had been bludgeoning 51st Mountain Corps from its hold on that part of the Gustav Line which lay between the north bank of the Liri and the Cassino massif, Clark's 5th Army continued to attack 14th Panzer Corps' positions between the south bank of the Liri and the sea. We will follow first the brilliant operations which the French Expeditionary Corps developed from the small beginnings of 12th May. It will be remembered that Juin's object was to capture the keystone of the German positions facing him, formed by Mts Faito and Feuci, Mts Girofano and Majo. So far the French had taken only Mt Faito. When the remaining summits had been won, Juin intended to infiltrate the mountains on several lines so quickly that his shaken adversaries would not be able to recover themselves, and that any reserves which the German higher commanders sent forward would have no time to occupy organized positions. Once again 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division was to attack, and its first objectives were Mts Girofano and Cerasola. This time however the attack would not be 'silent' but was to have powerful artillery support from about 365 guns and howitzers, mainly of the calibres 155-mm and 105-mm.

At 3.15 a.m. on 13th May, about two and a half hours before sunrise, the F.E.C's artillery opened fire and soon the slopes and crests of Mts Girofano and Cerasola were studded with shell-bursts each of which threw up a cloud of smoke and dust with a flash of angry red at its heart.[67] At 4 a.m. 4th Moroccan Infantry rose from lairs among the rocks and began to climb, slowly and stiffly at first and then faster and faster in the unhurried rhythm of men accustomed to move on hills. On this occasion the fire of 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 131st Grenadier Regiment and 71st Infantry Division's reconnaissance battalion was random. The torrent of French shells kept the German heads down, and sometimes lucky direct hits destroyed or damaged a block-house or sangar. Under this covering fire the Moroccan Infantry closed to assaulting distance and then, as the guns lengthened their range, the savage work with bullets, grenades, and the steel began, point-blank. The Germans were by no means cowed or disorganized and their strongpoints had to be stormed.

Digitized by Google

The resistance on Mt Girofano was particularly stubborn, but by 1.30 p.m. no Germans remained there except the dead and the wounded; none but the wounded had been given quarter. The fighting on Mt Cerasola was of the same kind but less fierce, and ended far more quickly at about 7.30 a.m. The slopes and crests of both mountains were strewn with French and German corpses, and the pitiful litter of a battlefield: helmets and equipment cast aside, broken weapons, letters from home, photographs, rags and tatters.

While this fighting had been going on 5th Moroccan Infantry, supported by artillery fire which had been switched from Mts Girofano and Cerasola, and by 8th Moroccan Infantry, and 6th Moroccan Infantry (4th Moroccan Mountain Division), attacked Mt Feuci. Hardly had the attack begun when 2nd Battalion 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment counter-attacked. No troops could have been more unlucky than those Germans because the French had been expecting this attempt. The German habit of quick counter-attacks was common knowledge, and the French Intelligence staff had shrewdly deduced that this battalion was the sole German local reserve. It was not difficult to foresee that it would repeat its counter-attack of the 12th. It did, and was obliterated by the French artillery. Dody postponed his attack on Mt Feuci until 10 a.m. because of it, and at that hour 1st and 2nd Battalions, 5th Moroccan Infantry began to climb the naked and forbidding rocks. The German guns and mortars at once brought down defensive fire but the range had been over-estimated and most of the fire passed over the assailants. To the surprise of those who, like Juin, were watching from Mt Ornito, no murderous German cross-fire from small-arms broke out. Instead scattered bursts told of light resistance and at 11.30 a.m. French figures appeared on the summit of Mt Feuci. The way to Mt Majo was open, and so far as could be seen that crest was unoccupied. A patrol cautiously went forward and drew no fire. At 3 p.m. it reached the summit of Mt Majo, and the keystone of the German defences in this sector lay in French hands.

While 2nd Moroccan Division was attacking the heights the armoured group of 1st French Infantry Division thrust northwards towards S. Andrea, S. Ambrogio and S. Apollinare.[68*] The capture of Mts Cerasola and Girofano quenched the flanking fire which had held up 1st French Infantry Division on 12th May, and movement was rapid. By nightfall on the 13th S. Andrea and S. Ambrogio

---

* The main units of the Group were 757th U.S. Tank Battalion, 3rd Moroccan Regimnaissance Regiment (detached from 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division), 8th A/Tk Reconent (*Chasseurs d'Afrique*) and three companies of 22nd North African Battalion.

Digitized by Google

had been cleared and the French had reached the outskirts of S. Apollinare.

In the neighbourhood of Castelforte 6th Moroccan Infantry Regiment (4th Moroccan Mountain Division) and 3rd Algerian Division made good headway against 71st Infantry Division. 6th Moroccan Infantry followed 5th up Mt Feuci and then turned sharply southwards against Colle Ceschito which they soon captured. Sevez then directed 6th Moroccan Infantry to turn north-westwards towards the Castelforte–Coreno road, and sent 2nd Moroccan Infantry Regiment southwards from Colle Ceschito to capture Colle Siola. Meanwhile at 3.30 a.m. 4th Tunisian Infantry Regiment (3rd Algerian Infantry Division) had taken advantage of the foothold in Castelforte which had been won on the 12th to press its attack. Little by little, house by house, the regiment wrested the village from the grasp of 194th Grenadier Regiment (71st Infantry Division). By midday the battle was near its end and by 3 p.m. 3rd Algerian Infantry Division's armoured group was moving along the mine-encumbered and obstructed road leading from Castelforte towards Coreno and Ausonia. At the same time 2nd Moroccan Infantry Regiment was mopping up the last German posts on Colle Siola.

The successes of the 13th May wiped out the check which the F.E.C. had suffered on the 12th. The Corps had now pierced its sector of the Gustav Line and was ready to exploit. As the French official historian has written, '*Sur le Majo flotte désormais un immense drapeau français visible de la mer Tyrrhénienne aux Abruzzes, symbole de la victoire française*'.* Juin's orders for exploitation can be summarized as follows. 3rd Algerian Infantry Division was to strike boldly towards Coreno and Ausonia to block the Ausente valley, and was then to be ready to advance on the axis Ausonia–Esperia. It was to relieve as quickly as possible any units of 4th Moroccan Mountain Division which might have reached the neighbourhood of Ausonia across country. The Mountain Corps (4th Moroccan Mountain Division and Guillaume's Moroccan Goums) was to advance as quickly as possible towards Mt Petrella to gain a footing on the eastern edge of the Aurunci mountains. 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division was to exploit rapidly north and north-westwards along the ridges leading from Mt Majo to Colle Cantalupo and Colle Castellone. 1st French Infantry Division was to mop up in the elbow formed by the Garigliano and the Liri, and was to be ready to strike through S. Apollinare to S. Giorgio.

* Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie (1943–44)*, (*op. cit.*) p. 107.

Digitized by Google

13th May was an unlucky day for 71st Infantry Division and therefore for 14th Panzer Corps. The various German commanders gradually recognized that Raapke was facing parts of four French divisions and 88th U.S. Division as well (the truth of course was that all four French divisions, but not the American division, were ranged against 71st Infantry Division).[69] Raapke soon grasped that the French attack towards, as he thought, Colle Agrifoglio was succeeding, and that their attacks southwards from Mt Faito were likely to cut off his troops in and near Castelforte. He learned too of the destruction of 2nd Battalion 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and no reinforcements seemed to be on their way to him. Therefore he ordered his troops to be ready to withdraw during the night 13th/14th May to the Orange Line, that is to say a line which ran from a point east of S. Apollinare–Vallemaio–Coreno–Mt la Civita.* The knowledge that a retreat was impending may have caused 71st Infantry Division to fight with less than its customary resolution. Raapke passed his information to Hartmann, his Corps Commander, who passed it to Kesselring in telephone conversations at 10.30 a.m. and soon after midday. During the second conversation Hartmann suggested that the danger of the French breaking through at Mts Faito and Majo might be met by committing the untouched reserves of 15th Panzer Grenadier Division but Kesselring did not agree. However as we have seen he sanctioned the reinforcement of 71st Infantry Division by two battalions of 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (90th Panzer Grenadier Division), and this news was contained in orders issued by Hartmann at 3.45 p.m. which also ratified Raapke's withdrawal to the Orange Line. News of a reinforcement however was a poor substitute for troops on the ground where they were needed, and at 10.45 p.m. Raapke told Hartmann that he would have to withdraw to the Dora Line within twenty-four hours because of his heavy casualties and his opponents' superior numbers.† Hartmann would not sanction such a rapid retreat as he felt that it would dangerously expose the right flank of 51st Mountain Corps. He therefore directed that the units on Raapke's northern wing must first hold an intermediate line S. Giorgio–Mt Calvi–S. Tommaso. He was too late.[70]

---

* Points of contact with neighbouring German formations were supposed to be: with 51st Mountain Corps at a point north-east of S. Apollinare: with 94th Infantry Division at Mt la Civita.

† The Dora Line was a switch line which had been planned to run from a point near Gaeta at first eastwards and then northwards round the bases of Mt Petrella and Mt Fammera to Esperia, and the Liri valley north of Pontecorvo. By the middle of April some twenty or thirty defensive works had been built.

Digitized by Google

'*L'exploitation va être foudroyante.*' These words by a French observer, General Chambe, were to be proved true.* By the evening of 14th May the F.E.C. had swept back the German rearguards on a front of 16 miles to a depth of 7 miles.[71] On the right of the F.E.C. 1st French Infantry Division's Armoured Group was opposed by 131st Grenadier Regiment and 115th Reconnaissance Battalion (named the Nagel Battle Group after 131st's Commanding Officer) and had a sharp fight to clear S. Apollinare. By 7 a.m. however the Armoured Group was pressing westwards to the narrow gap between the northern end of Colle Cantalupo and the Liri. Here Nagel's Battle Group and a battalion of 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment held out until about 4.30 p.m. At this time a regiment of 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division approached from the south along the line of crests which ran from Mt Cerasola to Colle Agrifoglio and then to S. Tommaso, Mt Paolino and Colle Cantalupo. Nagel, threatened from front and flank, fell back two miles to S. Giorgio.

2nd Moroccan Infantry Division had begun to advance, late on 13th May, along the ridge described above, and along the parallel line of crests Mt Majo–Colle Carosa–Mt Calvo–Colle Castellone. The Division had about five miles of very rough country to cover in a classic manoeuvre in mountain warfare; unencumbered infantry moving nimbly along high ridges and crests. At dawn on 14th May the French infantry struck a German rear-guard, probably from 194th Grenadier Regiment, and was held up until late afternoon when the Germans withdrew, leaving 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division to join hands with 1st French Infantry Division. The Moroccan Division's move had another effect. Its presence on Colle Carosa threatened the left flank of 191st Grenadier Regiment (the Matthes Battle Group) which was holding makeshift positions south-east of Ausonia against the advancing 3rd Algerian Infantry Division.

The Algerian Division set out from Castelforte on 14th May at daybreak, aiming at Ausonia, eight miles away along a bad and winding road, and La Bastia a couple of miles beyond Ausonia. Ausonia and La Bastia were tactically important places because they guarded the junction of the road from S. Giorgio with that leading to Esperia and S. Oliva—key routes for the German withdrawal. The Castelforte–Coreno–Ausonia road had been heavily mined and demolished, and the Algerian Division was led by bulldozers which worked steadily under fire. '*Leurs conducteurs doivent être considérés comme de magnifiques combattants de premier ligne*', remarks Chambe in their well-earned praise.[72] Owing to the delays imposed by the

---

* R. Chambe: *L'Epopée Française d'Italie 1944*, (Paris 1952) p. 176.

Digitized by Google

demolitions and Raapke's rearguards it was evening before the Algerian Division came within striking distance of Ausonia. Early in the morning Kesselring had insisted that the S. Giorgio–Ausonia line must be held, and so Hartmann told Raapke that Ausonia must be held at all costs, that its defence was more important than that of Mt. Petrella, and that the Orange Line could be given up.[73] Raapke accordingly extracted Battle Group Rumohr (211th Grenadier Regiment and 94th Füsilier Battalion) from his southern wing and ordered it to hold a defensive position two miles south-east of Ausonia. However both the Rumohr and Matthes Battle Groups were driven back by 3rd Algerian Division. By the end of 14th May 71st Division was in a sorry condition. Raapke reported that his fighting strength had been reduced by 70% and that in 191st and 194th Grenadier Regiments 80% of the officers had been killed or wounded. He complained that the Allies' artillery fire was devastating and that their air attacks were constant.

The misfortunes of 14th Panzer Corps and the increasing danger to the right flank of *AOK 10* were not caused by the F.E.C. alone and we must return to 2nd U.S. Corps if we would see the whole picture.

On the evening of 12th May, on the right of 2nd U.S. Corps, 88th U.S. Division's 350th Infantry had taken Ventosa, but its 351st Infantry had fallen short of its objective, S. Maria Infante.[74] In 85th U.S. Division 338th Infantry had reached a line east-west through Solacciano. The Division's 337th and 339th Infantry had taken S. Martino hill during the night 12th/13th May, but on the Division's extreme left 339th Infantry had been unable to perform a second task: to capture the ridge running south-west of Trimonsuoli.* By the end of 12th May Steinmetz (94th Infantry Division) was fairly satisfied although he had committed his last reserve, 1st Battalion, 276th Grenadier Regiment.

Before daylight on 13th May 338th Infantry attacked towards Pt 126 on 'S' ridge, but the German defence was too strong to overcome. At 4.30 p.m. 1st Battalion, 351st Infantry (88th U.S. Division) attacked Pt 126 from the south but it was halted by cross-fire from Pts 126 and 131. At about the same time part of 338th Infantry and some tanks took Pt 85, north-east of Solacciano, and held it against counter-attacks. 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry captured Pt 60 as well. Thus 2nd U.S. Corps' two-day battle had produced mixed results. On the extreme right 350th Infantry had

---

* *85th U.S. Infantry Division:* 337th, 338th, 339th Infantry Regiments.
88th U.S. Infantry Division: 349th, 350th, 351st Infantry Regiments.

Digitized by Google

succeeded in its tasks. In the centre 351st Infantry and 338th Infantry were held up in front of S. Maria Infante and Pts 126 and 131. On the left, part of 339th Infantry had captured the S. Martino hill, but had not been able to advance in the neighbourhood of Mt Scauri.*

On the German side, 71st Infantry Division's retreat before the French forced Steinmetz to pull his left flank back to Mt La Civita during the night 13th/14th May to conform. By this time Kesselring had approved a gradual withdrawal to the Dora Line, and had decided to reinforce Hartmann with a battery of A.A. guns and a troop of 'Hornets' from 525th Panzer Jäger Abteilung. He also agreed that a battalion of 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment might leave the Gaeta–Terracina sector to form a reserve for 94th Infantry Division.†

On the morning of 14th May 88th U.S. Division drove rear-guards of 94th Infantry Division off Mt dei Bracchi and out of S. Maria Infante, and pushed forward to Mt La Civita. The American advance drew from Kesselring a tirade directed against the unfortunate Hartmann and Steinmetz for an incompetent defence, but he gave no help except for a promise of reinforcement by 15th Panzer Grenadier Division's tank battalion, and 3rd Battalion 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment—which was ordered into the Dora Line. The hard fighting with 2nd U.S. Corps had destroyed 60% of 94th Infantry Division's fighting strength, and Steinmetz had used up all his local reserves.

On 5th Army's front two kinds of warfare contrasted sharply with each other. The French Expeditionary Force was demonstrating mountain warfare in all its simplicity and subtlety, by laying hold of the tactically important summits, by exploiting along the high ridges with lightly equipped infantry, and by thrusting its mixed columns of armour and lorry-borne infantry along the few bad roads. The two kinds of manoeuvre were beautifully harmonized and the result was that the Germans found the country too big to defend with their available troops. It is but a slight exaggeration to say that no sooner had the Germans withdrawn from one position and were settling down thankfully in the next, feeling that they had broken contact, when they became aware of French North African troops above them on some flanking hill or ridge, while clouds

* German records state that the S. Martino hill was not abandoned until 15th May. The discrepancy between the German and American accounts seems to be due to differences in nomenclature. The Americans took Pts 66 and 69 to be S. Martino hill; the Germans believed these gentle swells in the farmland to be part only of S. Martino hill.

† A 'Hornet' was a self-propelled 8.8-cm anti-tank gun (Pak 43/1).

Digitized by Google

of dust on the roads and the humming and clattering of engines and tracks announced the arrival of tanks, armoured cars, and infantry in columns advancing upon them in the lower ground.

On the seaward flank of the Gustav Line the American divisions had to fight in quite another fashion. Here on the lower slopes of Damiano (Pt 411), on the hillocks and ridges overlooking the stony bed of the Ausente, on bastions like Mt Scauri, the Germans had been improving their excellent positions since February, co-ordinating their defensive fire plans until guns, mortars, machine guns and light automatics faced the attackers with a seemingly impenetrable *chevaux-de-frise* of missiles. Somehow the American infantry had to get through this defensive fire, and somehow they did. The enormous weight of the American artillery fire would beat down the defenders here or there for ten, fifteen, twenty minutes, and in these intervals the dogged American infantry inched forward until they came within assaulting distance of pillbox or bunker. Then came the rush, the shattering explosions of grenades at close quarters, the raucous chatter of sub-machine guns and the sudden silence which told the grimy and exhausted victors that another segment of the Gustav Line had fallen. And then—perhaps after as little as thirty minutes—the roles were reversed, and the Americans had to hold their gains against counter-attack. It was grim, unsparing fighting.

The state of 14th Panzer Corps at the end of 15th May can be well described by a line from John Donne:

> 'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone'.*

Hartmann, Raapke, and Steinmetz scarcely knew where their shattered Battle Groups were or how they were faring. The Corps' War Diary sums up the dismal day in these words:

> 'Today the Corps' hard defensive battles were again characterized by the enemy's suffocating superiority in infantry and tanks and our troops again incurred very heavy casualties from their exposure to ceaseless shelling in coverless terrain. With absolutely no opposition from our own fighters, spotter-planes cruised all day over the battlefield and directed the enemy's fire on to our gun-sites and infantry positions, thus taking a heavy toll of all daytime movements behind the front as well as of the units which were in action.'[75]

By nightfall on 15th May the various Battle Groups held the following positions, north to south. The Nagel Battle Group (131st

* John Donne: *From An Anatomie of the World: Poems and Prose.* (Nonsuch Press 1946) p. 202.

Digitized by Google

Grenadier Regiment, 115th Reconnaissance Battalion) had lost S. Giorgio but was holding another position four miles to the west between Mad. Li Reali and Massa Franco. 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division, a reinforcement) held disconnected positions on the line Massa Franco–La Bastia. The Matthes Battle Group (remnants of 191st and 194th Grenadier Regiments, and part of 211th Grenadier Regiment) were at La Bastia. The Rumohr Battle Group (211th Grenadier Regiment less detachments) near Ausonia had almost broken up. Stragglers to the rear in this area were a warning that a few of the German troops were losing their nerve. Parts of Rumohr Battle Group nevertheless rallied near Esperia, while 94th Füsilier Battalion and 114th Reconnaissance Battalion were sent to defend Mts Petrella and Chiavica. By 6 p.m. 94th Infantry Division's front had been broken at the junction of Highway 7 and the Ausonia road north-west of Mt Scauri. By 10.50 p.m. Castellonorato was lost, and the troops there scrambled five miles westward to Trivio.

During 15th May Kesselring and von Vietinghoff issued orders in the hope of shoring up the collapsing 14th Panzer Corps, and these were the first attempts by superior German commanders to co-ordinate *AOK 10's* defence since the battle began.[76] At noon Kesselring permitted 94th Infantry Division to withdraw into the Dora Line, thus extending to this division the permission which had been given to 71st Infantry Division on the 14th. However 94th Infantry Division was to hold Mt Scauri securely. At 3 p.m. von Vietinghoff directed that *AOK 10* must continue to defend its right wing, and must at all costs prevent 5th and 8th Armies from breaking through north and south of the River Liri. 94th Infantry Division's retreat to the Dora Line had been authorised in order to gain time for reserves (as yet unspecified) to be sent to it. 71st Infantry Division was to strengthen its defence by 'every conceivable means' (a rather sterile instruction) and in particular was to prevent Esperia from being cut off by the enemy making outflanking moves in the mountains. This last instruction was caused by surprising thrusts by the F.E.C. across the heights of Mts Petrella and Fammera which we have yet to describe. At 8.15 p.m. Kesselring issued a written directive, the gist of which was as follows.* *AOK 10's* immediate task was to defend the Dora Line *à outrance*, and in this line Esperia was a pivotal point. Mt Scauri must be held as a bastion in order to defeat any Allied attempt to turn *AOK 10's* right flank. Everything must be done to strengthen the defences on each side of the Liri and this sector should be controlled by a single commander. In order to prevent the Allies from breaking through 'in the direction of Rome' *AOK 10's* right wing must be strengthened by reinforcements drawn from its left wing. *AOK 14*

Digitized by Google

was to hold 26th Panzer Division ready to oppose possible landings between Gaeta and Terracina. There was little 'meat' in this directive and in twenty-four hours it became out of date.* By the evening of 15th May 5th Army had broken through that part of the Gustav Line which lay between the south bank of the Liri and the sea, and we take up again the story of the F.E.C. and of 2nd U.S. Corps on that day.

We have already shortly described the nature of the fighting in the mountains and in the coastal strip. A commonplace and partly true saying about the campaign in Italy is that the nature of the fighting did not change, although the names of mountains, rivers, towns, and villages did. We shall therefore only summarize the actions of the F.E.C. and of 2nd U.S. Corps, except when their actions are sufficiently important or interesting to call for some detail.

Juin's orders, issued on the afternoon of 14th May, foresaw that the enemy would attempt to check the French advance by holding the Esperia defile.[77] For if the road junction north of Ausonia could be taken, and then Esperia, German troops retreating before 1st French Infantry Division on the south bank of the Liri would be deprived of their best route of withdrawal. Strong defensive positions, it was known, had already been prepared on La Bastia;[78] should the Germans attempt to hold them against a frontal assault then their flank must be turned by an attack from the south. The first blow would be struck by 3rd Algerian Division, directed to clear the Ausonia–Esperia road, but Juin urged General Sevez to hasten the advance of the Mountain Corps in order to supply the necessary pressure on the German right flank. 1st French Infantry Division was to advance along the south bank of the Liri and to undertake a similar movement from the north.[79] 2nd Moroccan Infantry was to move into temporary reserve. Withdrawing a division into reserve was a regular feature of Juin's tactics and by this means he ensured that he had always in hand a division which was at least partly rested and refreshed for further tasks.

General Sevez had to find new troops for the advance westward, since the two regiments allotted to exploitation had suffered heavy casualties in the assault.[80] Two Groups were formed and named after Colonel Bondis (Infantry Commander Moroccan Mountain Division) and Brigadier-General Guillaume of the Moroccan

* The main measures for reinforcement ordered by Kesselring up to 18th May, and by Hitler up to 16th May, have been given already on p. 127–8. The sector which lay astride the Liri passed under command of Major-General Baade (90th Panzer Grenadier Division) on 19th May.

Digitized by Google

Goums.* The Bondis Group was directed to move westwards over the towering escarpment of Mt Fammera and then to push north against the rear of the Esperia position.[83] The Guillaume Group, by arrangement with General Clark, was to pass through the American positions at Spigno and head for Mt Petrella and Mt Revole on two lines: 4th Group of Tabors through Castello and then north of Mt Petrella; 1st Group of Tabors, and later 1st Moroccan Infantry Regiment and the guns, to take a route to the south.

The Mountain Corps' movements led it directly across the centre line of 3rd Algerian Division, and staff officers rightly believe that such a movement is almost certain to cause traffic jams, long delays, and general confusion.[84] On this occasion the French staffs trusted to luck and the common sense of the various commanders in finding gaps in each other's columns through which to move. Their trust was justified and no confusion occurred. On the evening of 14th May Juin called for great exertions:

> *'Après deux jours de combat, malgré une résistance farouche, sur des positions qu'il croyait inexpugnables, l'ennemi se replie, désorganisé, battu . . . Je demande à tous de redoubler d'effort et de vigueur. Le magnifique succès d'hier est le gage de la victoire de demain. En avant!'*[85]

On 15th May de Monsabert sent two battalions of 3rd Algerian Infantry Regiment along the ridge east of Ausonia to clear Cisterna and Castelnuovo, which, by making skilful use of terrain, they succeeded in doing before noon.[86] A third battalion moved straight northwards along the road until it was checked by enemy fire from La Bastia and halted, to await the appearance of its own 7th Algerian Infantry Regiment on top of the tremendous cliffs of Mt Fammera. These had been cleared by an extraordinary feat carried out by the Bondis Group. During the night 14th/15th May a party of 'scouts' of 2nd Moroccan Infantry Regiment, specially trained in mountaineering, climbed the cliffs from foothold to foothold on the varying faces, and up gullies and chimneys, until they reached the summit.[87] There they surprised and knifed some German observation parties, who had very naturally believed that no human beings could climb up that mighty wall. Where some men had gone, others could follow and during the 15th the remainder of 2nd Moroccan Infantry Regiment and 7th Algerian Infantry climbed also, like mountain goats. On 16th May de Monsabert, who had correctly judged that Mt Fammera must have succumbed, waited no longer but struck

---

* *Bondis Group*, main units: 1st and 2nd Battalions, 2nd Moroccan Infantry Regiment: 3rd Group of Tabors (9th, 10th, 17th) Moroccan Goums; one battalion pack howitzers (75-mm).[81]

Guillaume Group: 1st Group of Tabors (2nd, 3rd, 12th) and 4th Group of Tabors (5th, 8th, 11th) Moroccan Goums; 1st Moroccan Infantry Regiment; two battalions pack howitzers (75-mm).[82]

Digitized by Google

straight at La Bastia from the east. This thrust, combined with a flank attack by 7th Algerians, carried La Bastia by noon. The way to Esperia lay open, and 3rd Algerian Infantry advanced on it.

Meanwhile Guillaume's Group had been thrusting westwards across the mountains[88]. On the right, 4th Group of Tabors took Mt Cavecce. On the left, his main force, headed by 1st Group of Tabors, reached Mt S. Angelo late on the 15th, and pressed onwards to occupy in succession Mt Altina, Mt Moleta and Mt Revole, which 12th Tabor reached on the morning of the 16th. It had covered seven crow-flight miles of terrible country. Guillaume's Group now had so firm a grip on the mountains that it had nothing to fear from the enemy and its real enemies were hunger, thirst, and exhaustion. The F.E.C. had now completed its part in the second phase of Keyes' plan, that is to say to seize Mt Revole and to exploit in the Ausonia valley.

The capture of S. Maria Infante on 14th May meant that 88th and 85th U.S. Divisions could begin the third phase of Keyes' plan which was that a division (88th as he decided in his detailed plan) would cross the mountains south of Mt Petrella and cut the Itri–Pico road near Itri.[89] Another division (85th) would take Mts Scauri and Campese and advance westwards through the coastal strip. The history of 5th Army remarks 'during the period 14th–21st May the enemy made no extensive stand in force in II Corps zone.'* This was the reward of the American Divisions' hard fighting. They now had to make hard marches across very rough country, and they marched—and fought—admirably.

Clark's orders on 15th May were to the effect given in the previous paragraph but he forbade 85th U.S. Division to move west of Mt Campese without his approval.[90] He ordered this restriction because he contemplated moving 85th U.S. Division and H.Q. 2nd U.S. Corps to Anzio by sea in the near future. If a single U.S. Division could carry on the pursuit to the Itri–Pico road and beyond, it was good tactics to reinforce 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio for its break out, which Alexander must order soon. In fact on 16th May 85th U.S. Division was placed at 72 hours' notice to transfer to Anzio, and H.Q. 2nd U.S. Corps at 24 hours' notice from 22nd May.

By nightfall on 14th May 88th U.S. Division had seized Mt La Civita and by 7.30 a.m. on the 15th its troops were in Spigno. Thus the gap through which the French Mountain Corps was passing was protected. In 85th U.S. Division 337th Infantry drove

* Lieut-Colonel Chester G. Starr (Editor). *From Salerno to the Alps* (Infantry Journal Press Washington, 1948) p. 205–6.

Digitized by Google

in German rear-guards and reached Castellonorato by midnight 15th/16th May. 338th Infantry advanced to the junction of Highway 7 with the Ausonia road. The pursuit, for such it was, continued on the 16th. 88th U.S. Division's 351st Infantry set out on mule-tracks and goat-paths in the wake of the French heading for Itri by way of Mt S. Angelo (Pt 1402) and Mt Ruazzo (Pt 1316) which was seven miles west of Spigno. The regiment's supplies were carried by pack mules but when Mt Ruazzo was reached on the evening of the 16th, 351st Infantry had outdistanced the animals and was temporarily out of range of its supporting artillery. In 85th U.S. Division on 16th May 338th and 339th Infantry captured Mt Scauri and advanced along Highway 7 to the Acquatraversa stream. On the Division's right flank 337th Infantry, and 349th Infantry attached from 88th U.S. Division, crossed the foothills and reached Mt Campese which the Germans were holding.

At 5.30 p.m. on 16th May von Vietinghoff described 14th Panzer Corps' plight as 'frightful' but a little over an hour later Kesselring learned from Rodt (15th Panzer Grenadier Division) that neither he nor Steinmetz believed the situation to be 'as bad as all that'.[91] von Altenstadt (14th Panzer Corps' Chief of Staff) however had heard from Raapke that he was hard pressed near Esperia and that the French had taken Mts Petrella and Fammera, and at 5 p.m. *AOK 10* learned that French troops were on Mt Revole. The French troops were by this time becoming terrifying ogres because they seemed to disregard the steepness of the mountains, the heat, and their own lives. By jumping ahead we have seen that on the evening of the 16th von Vietinghoff and Kesselring agreed that *AOK 10* must retreat to the Hitler Line, but before that decision was taken von Vietinghoff could do no more than order 14th Panzer Corps to prevent the enemy at all costs from breaking through to the Itri–Pico road. 274th Grenadier Regiment (94th Infantry Division) was holding Mt Campese which might prove to be the foundation of a new defensive line, and during the evening of 16th May Kesselring and von Vietinghoff agreed that troops must be taken from Formia and the Gaeta peninsula in order to stop the enemy east of Itri. There the Maetschke Battle Group (1st and 2nd Battalions 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of Rodt's 15th Panzer Grenadier Division) was at last relieved from coast-watching and was ordered to Piano del Campo, a plateau west of Mt Revole and just below it.* 276th Grenadier Regiment and 1st Battalion 267th Grenadier

* 3rd Battalion 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was retreating from Trivio, where Steinmetz had sent it earlier, presumably by an arrangement with Rodt.

Digitized by Google

Regiment (both from 94th Infantry Division) were trying to form a line, east of Itri, between Colle della Cercola and Terruta.

During the afternoon of the 16th Wentzell (*AOK 10's* Chief of Staff) described 71st Infantry Division as being no longer a fighting formation although some crumbs of comfort could be shaken from conflicting reports. The von Behr (200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment) and Nagel (131st Grenadier Regiment) Battle Groups were said to be holding out east of Esperia. The fate of Matthes Battle Group (remnants of 191st and 194th Grenadier Regiments of 71st Infantry Division) was unknown, although it was in fact retreating to positions west of Esperia. In this confused situation orders issued by the higher German commanders soon became obsolete. As we have already noticed by the morning of 17th May Kesselring had ordered 26th Panzer Division's Reconnaissance Battalion and the 1st Battalion of its 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment to Fondi, while the remainder of the regiment was destined for Pico. Later that same day the whole regiment was however sent to S. Oliva in the Hitler Line, to buttress 71st Infantry Division which could not carry out the instructions given by Hartmann on the evening of the 16th. These stated that 71st and 94th Infantry Divisions could prepare to withdraw, fighting, into the Hitler Line, but on 17th May 71st Infantry Division was to hold a line Mt del Lago–Esperia–Casa Chiaia. The line allocated to 94th Infantry Division ran (south to north) Formia–Terruta–Mt Mesole–Campello, and contact with 71st Infantry Division was to be re-established between Campello and Mt Fumone. It was Steinmetz' task to prevent the enemy from reaching Highway 82 between Itri and Campodimele. Further, 94th Infantry Division was to reconnoitre vigorously in order to discover the strength and whereabouts of the enemy and was to upset his supply lines by 'bold and rapid forays'. For the rest 15th Panzer Grenadier Division was to hold that part of the Hitler Line which lay near the coast, but was to prepare the permanent defences for demolition. Reinforcements for 14th Panzer Corps were mentioned without commitments: besides 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 400th Reconnaissance Battalion, 334th Infantry Division's Füsilier Battalion and 3rd Alpine Battalion.

On 17th May remnants of 71st Infantry Division and 305th Infantry Division's reconnaissance battalion were in no condition to hold Esperia. 3rd Algerian Infantry Division sent 3rd Algerian Infantry Regiment on to Mt d'Oro on the northern side of the road Esperia–Monticelli–S. Oliva and by 1 p.m. the Germans in Esperia had departed.[92] Anti-tank guns however remained to block the narrow defile between Mt d'Oro and Mt del Lago. In order to

Digitized by Google

advance towards S. Oliva the French would have to clear Mt del Lago and Mt Calvo, north of Mt d'Oro. Further north the Nagel Battle Group was delaying 1st French Infantry Division and was withdrawing slowly to a position behind the Forma Quesa stream.* The day's more colourful events belonged to Guillaume's Goums and Sevez's 4th Moroccan Mountain Division. Guillaume ordered 4th Group of Tabors and 1st Moroccan Infantry Regiment to seize Mt Faggeto by moving along the ridges which led from Mt Revole above the Piana valley and Campello. On the right of 4th Group, 1st Group of Tabors set out to secure Mt Croce, six miles to the north-west. Guillaume's men had been on the move since the 14th, the weather was hot, the going was hard and there was no water for men or animals to drink. The men resigned themselves to thirst, and the unfortunate animals suffered. Sometime after 2 p.m. a column of German infantry was seen crossing the Piano del Campo towards the Piana valley. It was 3rd Battalion 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment which had debussed at S. Nicola on Highway 82 and was heading for Mt Revole. Guillaume laid the simplest ambush. 1st Moroccan Infantry blocked the valley while the Tabors, like wraiths, flitted up on to the high ground on either side. The German column trudged on and probably no one in it suspected that he was marching up the valley of the shadow of death. At a suitable moment the Moroccan Infantry opened fire. The German battalion then staged and delivered a deliberate attack. When it was fairly committed, the Goumiers rose from cover and bounded down the hillsides like falling boulders to take the Germans from both flanks and from behind. In a few minutes nothing remained of the German battalion except the dead and groups of dazed prisoners. Guillaume's Group went on and seized Mt Faggeto by nightfall, but not Mt Croce. Mt Faggeto could be said to be a point on the Hitler Line and therefore a feather in the F.E.C.'s already well-adorned cap. When the French took this hill 94th and 71st Infantry Divisions could not make touch with each other in the area Campello–Mt Fumone as ordered. On the right flank the Bondis Group occupied Mt del Lago.

On 17th May Guillaume's force passed beyond the distance at which the available pack transport could supply it.[93] This exigency had been foreseen, and during the day 36 Bostons of U.S. XII

---

* From 16th May Juin entrusted General de Larminat with the task of co-ordinating the actions of 1st French Infantry Division and 3rd Algerian Infantry Division. On 30th April Clark had asked Alexander to allow de Larminat and a small Corps Headquarters to come to Italy to help Juin. Alexander at first refused to augment what seemed to be the sufficient French staffs, but on 9th May granted Clark's request. de Larminat arrived in Italy on 11th May and was followed by a Corps Headquarters composed of 54 officers and men and two signal units.

Digitized by Google

Tactical Air Command dropped supplies of water, ammunition, and food.

2nd U.S. Corps continued the pursuit during 17th May. On the right 351st Infantry (88th U.S. Division) descended from Mt Ruazzo to attack Mt Grande which stood west of the Itri–Pico road, but was stopped by German rear-guards. 351st Infantry had by this time outstripped its pack transport and had nearly exhausted its water, ammunition and food.[94] On the left patrols of 338th Infantry (85th U.S. Division) reached Formia by midday. 337th Infantry took Mt Campese and swept onwards to Maranola.

On 17th May von Senger returned to command his shattered 14th Panzer Corps. Hartmann's orders of the 16th had proved impracticable. For example Maetschke Battle Group (1st and 2nd Battalions, 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment) should have opposed Guillaume's advance from Mt Revole.[95] But Steinmetz had kept 1st Battalion at Formia to face the Americans, and because of unaccountable delays 2nd Battalion had not even reached Itri. Thus only 3rd Battalion was on the scene to face, and to be destroyed by, the Guillaume Group. Much displeased by these developments, Kesselring set about 'commanding sections', the British Army's phrase for a senior officer's meddlesomeness. On the evening of 17th May he ordered the greater part of 94th Infantry Division and attached troops to regroup to defend the stretch of Highway 82 which led north from Itri, and also the road which led westwards to Fondi. He directed that 267th Grenadier Regiment and 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment would defend Itri: 400th Reconnaissance Battalion would hold Mt Vele facing Mt le Pezze: 3rd Alpine Battalion would move to Campodimele and would recapture Mt Faggeto on 18th May. 26th Panzer Division's reconnaissance battalion would guard the Fondi road. von Vietinghoff and von Senger seem to have accepted these dispositions and merely arranged that Ortner and his staff would supervise operations to close the gap between 94th and 71st Infantry Divisions. They also confirmed that when 90th Panzer Grenadier Division reached the Hitler Line it would be transferred from 51st Mountain Corps to 14th Panzer Corps so that von Senger would control all the troops immediately north and south of the Liri. von Vietinghoff decided that such troops of 71st Infantry Division as were still in the Esperia sector would withdraw into the Hitler Line the same night, 17th/18th May.

These attempts to patch the front may have been fairly well devised but two circumstances in particular undid them. 5th Army had the initiative and was moving very fast in spite of very difficult terrain. The Allied air forces dominated the battlefield by day and night and broke up almost every German movement.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Map 9
Ost Palombara
To Frosinone
Mt Siserno
To Ceccano
Roccagorga
Prossedi
To Sezze
Priverno
Roccasecca dei Volsci
23rd
Amaseno
14 PZ C
Mt delle Fate
1090
Mt Calvo
21st
1045
339 Inf
Mt Copiccio
21st
Monte S. Biagio
S. Stefano
338 Inf
Mt Leano
676
Giusto
Fondi
Mt Croce
360
94
22nd – 24th
Tre Canneto
Terracina
TERRACINA
for night 19th/20th May

The Germans therefore could never move troops quickly enough to prevent the Americans and French from deepening and widening local penetrations. The references to Allied air supremacy in *AOK 10's* war diary became almost monotonous. On 18th May Kesselring hoped that the transfer of all of 26th Panzer Division to 14th Panzer Corps would be his last 'present' to *AOK 10*. He hoped that on the 18th 305th Infantry Division would begin to relieve 71st Infantry Division, and that 334th Infantry Division would begin to relieve another exhausted division, probably 94th. But by 18th May only one battalion of 305th Infantry Division's infantry (2nd Battalion, 578th Grenadier Regiment) had reached 14th Panzer Corps, while the Allied air attacks on Avezzano and its neighbourhood were making it impossible to depend on punctual moves of troops from east to west. An immediate consequence was that von Senger had to prop up 71st Infantry Division by committing 26th Panzer Division piecemeal.

On 18th May 3rd Algerian Infantry Division swept the Rumohr Battle Group from Montevetro, and pushed on through Monticelli to attack 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment in S. Oliva.[96] Simultaneously 1st French Infantry Division took Mts Calvo and S. Maria from the Nagel Battle Group and so was able to help 3rd Algerian Division by fire. After a short but fierce engagement 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was driven out of S. Oliva and withdrew a couple of miles north-westwards to temporary delaying positions on Mt del Mandrone. This defeat shocked von Senger and von Vietinghoff because 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was a seasoned unit which should have done better. Moreover much of the German artillery was at S. Oliva and the French captured some forty field guns there. A further advantage was gained by the French when their engineers quickly ran a Jeep track from S. Oliva up the Rio della Ripo to supply the Mountain Corps.[97] The Mountain Corps, on 18th May, secured Mt Croce and Mt le Pezze north and south of Campodimele and was then well placed to cut the Itri–Pico road when it pleased.

In the American sector 351st Infantry, on 18th May, had to wait for the arrival of supporting artillery.[98] This arrived towards evening in oddly contrasting shapes: huge 240-mm howitzers, and the small 75-mm pack howitzers. Early on 19th May 351st Infantry attacked Mt Grande and found it deserted. Patrols then pushed south into Itri where they were joined by 349th Infantry.

The F.E.C. and 2nd U.S. Corps could justly feel proud. The French had broken through the Gustav, Orange, and Dora Lines in seven days and nights of fighting and movement and were now

Digitized by Google

threatening part of the Hitler Line. von Altenstadt made the following remark in a report written at the end of May. 'The infantryman [German] cannot suddenly become a mountain fighter; on the hills he feels helpless and alone and is therefore no match for African mountaineers. He will fight well in the valleys for there he feels at home.'*[99] The American Corps had broken through Gustav and Dora, and also was threatening the Hitler Line. It is no disparagement of 8th Army's successes to say that it was 5th Army's advance which dismayed the German commanders, and ensured that the Hitler Line would fall.

'Too late' describes the German moves on 18th May. 26th Panzer Division's armoured and other units, and 2nd Battalion 578th Grenadier Regiment failed to arrive to help 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment at S. Oliva. The von Behr Battle Group (200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment) which had been sent to help 94th Infantry Division could not dislodge the French from their positions north and south of Campodimele. 400th Reconnaissance Battalion on Mt Vele was wavering and 3rd Alpine Battalion could not recapture Mt Faggeto. Accordingly the larger part of 94th Infantry Division was ordered to withdraw during the night 18th/19th May to a line covering the western end of the Hitler Line. The new line ran from Mt Moneta near the coast to Mt Lorigno (*see Map 9*).

On 19th May Alexander signalled to Sir Alan Brooke, 'I am satisfied with the progress of operations which are beginning to take the shape I designed for them'.[100]

(vi)

See Maps 2 (*for targets in Battle Area*) *and* 3

In Chapter I we reviewed air operations during the period from dawn 1st April to dawn 12th May, the day after the end of the concerted attempt (Operation 'Strangle') to destroy the German rail, road, and sea communications south of the line Pisa–Rimini. In Chapter II we described the directives which governed the operations of Mediterranean Allied Air Forces during Alexander's Spring offensive. In this chapter we begin with some general observations upon air operations during the period from dawn 12th May to dawn 5th June, that is to say from the beginning of 5th and 8th Armies' offensive until their arrival in Rome and its neighbourhood. We then return to air operations during the period from

* A note on the nature of mountain warfare is to be found in *Mediterranean and Middle East* Volume V p. 387–91.

Digitized by Google

dawn 12th May to dawn 19th May in which the Armies breached the Gustav Line and began to advance to the Hitler Line.

Between dawn 12th May and dawn 5th June Mediterranean Allied Air Forces flew 56,441 sorties, a figure which does not include sorties flown against ports and shipping.*[101] An impression of the amount of air activity can be gained by saying that the total number of sorties in the period given represents some 2,352 sorties flown during every 24 hours. The impression is of course artificial because the number of sorties flown varied from day to day, but is useful nevertheless. The improved weather of late spring and early summer favoured flying, yet on at least nine days bad weather, mainly heavy cloud, spoiled the operations of the medium day bombers and of the heavy bombers.[102]

The main feature of air operations was the supremacy of the Allied air forces, a priceless advantage for the Allied armies. In May and June 1944 the German Air Force in Italy had become a spent force to all intents and purposes. From such German records of sorties as are available it appears that the number of sorties flown during every 24 hours, an artificial figure like that of the Allies' daily sorties, was between 100 and 130. The German Air Force acted offensively, to noticeable extent, on perhaps fourteen occasions.[103] On 10th May *Luftflotte 2* possessed 343 operational aircraft, not counting transport aircraft, and by 10th June the number had fallen to 203. By about the same date constructive work on airfields had ceased south of the line Piombino–S. Benedetto del Tronto, and installations south of the line Orbetello–Pescara for control of aircraft or for radar had been dismantled. Two battalions of G.A.F. troops had demolished as much as possible airfields from which the G.A.F. had withdrawn. No true comparison can be made between the numbers of Allied and German aircraft which were lost because so many more Allied aircraft than German flew, always in the teeth of the German anti-aircraft defence. Between 12th May and 5th June the Allies lost 357 aircraft, 8 of them in the Eastern Mediterranean.[104] The Germans lost 170, of which 15 aircraft and 33 gliders were lost in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The principal targets of Allied air attacks in Italy during the period 19th March to 4th June were motor transport, roads and railways. The table below shows the approximate number of sorties flown against each type of target and the tons of bombs dropped on each.[105] Up to the end of the 'Strangle' operation on 11th May the

* Table I, at the end of this chapter, shows in detail the sorties flown by Mediterranean Allied Air Forces during the period dawn 12th May to dawn 5th June. Tables II and III, also at the end of this chapter, show in detail the approximate sorties flown against targets in Italy by the same air forces and the bombloads dropped by them between dawn 12th May and dawn 19th May. The tables do not include the sorties flown against ports and shipping. These sorties are accounted for in Chapter VII.

Digitized by Google

railways received far the greater weight of attack, not only in the 'Strangle' area north of the battle area but also within the battle area itself. From 12th May to 4th June the weight of attack upon the railways north of the battle area, although much reduced, was still greater than the weight of attack upon motor transport and roads. However within the battle area motor transport and roads attracted the greatest weight of attack because they were among the main targets of the much increased direct air support which the Allied air forces were providing for the land forces' attacks on the Gustav Line.

Target	Period			
	19th March—11th May		12th May—4th June	
	Approximate Sorties	Tons of Bombs	Approximate Sorties	Tons of Bombs
NORTH OF THE BATTLE AREA				
M.T. and Roads	1,317	727	2,860	3,122
	Operation 'Strangle'			
Railways	16,926	17,978	8,772	11,755
WITHIN THE BATTLE AREA				
M.T. and Roads	639	314	6,729	4,144
Railways	1,110	620	1,031	556

The results of the attacks upon these types of target were highly satisfactory to the Allies because they interrupted German rail and road traffic to an almost intolerable degree. It became almost useless for German staff officers to plan movements because nine out of ten plans were thrown out of gear by air attacks. Luck ruled rather than calculation, and a creeping paralysis fastened upon German movements although it never became complete. Commanders in the German armies continually complained of never-ending air attacks and of their own air force, few in number and feeble in operations.

Other types of target also were bombed and examples during the period 15th May to 4th June are:[106]

	Approximate Sorties	*Tons of Bombs*
Towns (as centres of communication)	1,589	800
Artillery positions	1,037	508
Supply and ammunition dumps	406	357
Headquarters	220	98

Allied fighters continually strafed whatever suitable targets they could find, during fighter sweeps, or when fighter-bombers had

Digitized by Google

completed their bombing, or when fighter escorts could safely turn aside from the duties of escort.

A notable feature of air operations during the advance to Rome was that they demonstrated yet again the great and flexible power of a Tactical Air Force when handled by a single commander. Brigadier-General Gordon P. Saville, Commanding General of U.S. XII Tactical Air Command, controlled tactical air support and tactical air reconnaissance for 5th and 8th Armies, and switched the weight of his air forces from area to area and from one type of target to another as changing situations demanded.*

The air operations with which this section continues are those which were carried out during the period from dawn 12th May to dawn 19th May, and covers from the point of view of the Allied air forces, what General Eaker had described as the Assault Phase of operations on land. The air forces undertook no preparatory operations by way of 'softening up' the objectives of the land forces for fear that air attacks of this kind might prejudice whatever surprise the armies might be hoping to gain.[107] As we have seen in Chapter II air operations during the Assault Phase were the following. To continue to attack the German L. of C. and if these attacks caused the enemy to try to withdraw, to block that withdrawal so that the armies might give the *coup de grâce* to their trapped opponents. Second, to carry out whatever counter-air force operations might be required. Thirdly, to give direct air support to the land forces whenever it was required. Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force was required to carry out one particular operation and to be ready to carry out another during the Assault Phase. The first was to destroy specified German headquarters on D day and has been described in Section (ii) of this chapter. The second was to be ready, from the first to the eleventh day of the land battle, to make attacks 'to assist the favourable development of the situation'.

A summary of the effort of M.A.A.F. (excluding operations against ports and shipping) against targets in Italy during the three short periods given above is:

	Sorties	*Bombloads in tons*
Dawn 12th May to dawn 13th May	1,277	1,570
Dawn 13th May to dawn 15th May	3,326	4,611
Dawn 15th May to dawn 19th May	3,469	2,492
	8,072	8,673

* There are interesting earlier examples of this type of control. On May 2nd 1943 Air Commodore K. B. B. Cross (A.O.C. No. 242 Group R.A.F.) was given operational control of the whole of Northwest African Tactical Air Force and of medium day bombers from Northwest African Strategic Air Force. During the first days of the invasion of Sicily Air Vice-Marshal Harry Broadhurst (A.O.C. Western Desert Air Force), when

Continued over page

Digitized by Google

For the purpose of the story 12th May can be the starting-point, and during each of the short periods given above it will be convenient to group operations as those within the area of battle (*see Map 3*); those which were made up of attacks upon the German L. of C.; and attacks upon the G.A.F.'s airfields. On 12th May heavy cloud lay over most of Italy and in one way and another spoiled half of the medium day bombers' attempts to isolate the battlefield. Nevertheless the Mitchells flew 166 sorties, the Marauders 123, and together dropped 425 tons of bombs. Their targets varied from command posts and bodies of troops to roads and bridges and were, in order roughly from west to east, at Fondi, Itri, Pico, and Castrocielo. The Desert Air Force sent 48 Baltimores to attack guns at Pontecorvo, and 48 American Bostons attacked positions, probably command posts, at Arce and Pico. The fighter-bombers also were active over the battlefield. American Kittyhawks and Thunderbolts flew 228 sorties, and British Mustangs and Kittyhawks 113 sorties, together dropping 160 tons of bombs. The tactical reconnaissance squadrons were very successful in spotting positions occupied by the German artillery, and the fighter-bombers attacked those near Atina every twenty minutes during the day, thus harassing guns which were peculiarly troublesome to the British formations fighting at and across the Gari. Elsewhere the fighter-bombers chose their targets at Pontecorvo, Pico, and immediately west of Cassino. They also flew much further afield against railway targets in central Italy. American and French Thunderbolts, based in Corsica, flew 136 sorties and dropped 76 tons of bombs in these tasks. Railway tracks were cut between Empoli and Florence and between Empoli and Chiusi, and at Poggibonsi. The station at Certaldo was put out of action. On the east coast of Italy Ancona station was closed and neighbouring bridges at Chiaravalle and Senigallia were damaged. Thirty-six Spitfire fighter-bombers of the Desert Air Force cut the railway lines between Aquila and Sulmona in central Italy.

M.A.S.A.F.'s heavy day bombers carried the attack upon the railways to greater distances. Their targets were marshalling-yards, mainly on the west coast and may be listed as follows:

Aircraft	*Place*	*Tons of bombs*
37 Liberators	Chiavari	83
31 Fortresses	Chivasso	83
29 Liberators	Marina di Carrara	65
59 Liberators	Viareggio	113

Continued

he had established his headquarters ashore, controlled all air operations in support of 8th Army and 7th U.S. Army until sufficient ground had been captured to enable the Commanding General of U.S. XII Air Support Command to establish his headquarters ashore, and then take control of the air support for 7th U.S. Army.

Digitized by Google

Also, as if to demonstrate the flexibility of air forces, 32 Liberators dropped 57 tons of bombs on Ferrara at the other side of Italy. Attacks on airfields were modest—34 Fortresses dropped 91 tons of bombs at Ladispoli, Furbara, and Tarquinia, all near Rome, while Lightnings from Corsica strafed Piacenza far away to the north. During the night 12th/13th May the Wellingtons attacked harbours on the west coast and 17 Bostons of the Desert Air Force attacked road transport immediately north and south of Rome. Five Baltimores did likewise in the very large area defined by Aquila–Sulmona –Atina–Avezzano.

During the night 12th/13th May the German Air Force roused itself to deal a hard blow at airfields in Corsica where Allied aircraft had gathered in readiness for Alexander's offensive. Ten bombers created a diversion by attacking Bastia while about fifty others attacked Poretta and Alesani on the east coast. They destroyed 16 Allied aircraft on the ground, damaged 26 beyond repair and another 134 in ways that were reparable. It was a very satisfactory night's work for the enemy.

During 13th and 14th May M.A.T.A.F. divided its effort almost equally between direct support of 5th and 8th Armies and attacks on the German L. of C. in central Italy.[108] Within the battlefield the targets of the Allied air attacks were much the same as on the 12th. For example 66 Kittyhawk and Mustang fighter-bombers, and 48 Baltimores, all of the Desert Air Force, dropped 65 tons of bombs, during 13th May, on the German artillery at Atina. The American Boston light bombers also were active, mostly against German command posts. A feature of both days was the work of Rover David and the Cabrank against targets, some of which were found by tactical reconnaissance aircraft employed on 'spotting' for the guns, and by A.O.P. aircraft proper.* As typical examples, on 13th May 30 Kittyhawks and 6 Mustangs dropped 28 tons of bombs on gun and mortar positions near Pignataro, thus helping 8th Indian Division; on the 14th May 20 Kittyhawks dropped 15 tons of bombs to help 4th Division to advance west of Cassino town. On the 13th the Cabrank was filled nine times in five and a half hours and on the 14th ten times in five hours.

The attacks upon the L. of C. included, during 13th May, 139 sorties by the Mitchells which dropped 216 tons of bombs within the area of battle. On the 14th the whole force of medium day bombers,

---

* The distribution of A.O.P. Squadrons was:[109]

8th Army	*5th Army*	*5th Corps*
10th Corps — No. 654	6th U.S. Corps— No. 655 (less flight)	No. 651
13th Corps — One flight, No. 655 No. 657		

Digitized by Google

except the Desert Air Force's Marauders, turned against the German L. of C. in central Italy and particularly against bridges. Counting in attacks during the 13th, these targets received 230 sorties and 384 tons of bombs. During the 13th and 14th a bridge north of Terontola was destroyed and the railway line Terontola–Foligno–Orte was blocked. The line Empoli–Chiusi was also blocked because bridges between Siena and Asciano were damaged and the track at Montepulciano was cut. The fighter-bombers also helped and the long range of the Thunderbolts based at Naples and in Corsica proved to be most useful.

M.A.S.A.F. again concentrated its attacks against marshalling-yards. Some were in north-east Italy, for example Trento, Treviso, Mestre, Faenza, and others were in the north of the country—for example Piacenza and Borgo S. Lorenzo. The heaviest attacks were at Vicenza where 308 tons of bombs fell and at Ferrara which received 225 tons. On the 13th the heavy bombers attacked bridges at Bolzano and over the Avisio in the far north. As a result railway traffic was stopped for greater or less periods at Trento, Treviso, Vicenza, Padua, Piacenza, Parma, Bologna and Imola. During the nights 13th/14th and 14th/15th May Wellingtons, Liberators and Halifaxes of No. 205 Group R.A.F. kept up the attack upon marshalling-yards and bridges while Bostons and Baltimores of the Desert Air Force harassed enemy movements in the approaches to the battlefield.

German airfields now came under attack. On 14th May 142 Liberators and Fortresses dropped 330 tons of bombs at Piacenza, half the bombload consisting of 17,082 twenty-pound fragmentation bombs and half of 500-lb. bombs. On the same day 75 Liberators dropped 13,507 twenty-pound bombs at Reggio Emilia. Piacenza and Reggio Emilia were bases for F.W. 190 aircraft, and at these airfields 25 aircraft of various types were destroyed or damaged. The long-range Lightnings strafed airfields at Aviano and Villaorba.

On 15th and 16th May M.A.S.A.F.'s heavy bombers were grounded by bad weather.[110] On 17th May they attacked ports and made one attack on the railway at Orbetello on the west coast. On 18th May the heavy bombers turned to the Balkans in spite of bad weather which reduced effective sorties to about half the total flown. 208 Fortresses and Liberators dropped 446 tons of bombs on four oil refineries at Ploesti in Rumania, and in Yugoslavia 111 Fortresses and Liberators dropped 250 tons on marshalling-yards and bridges at Belgrade, while another force dropped 120 tons on the marshalling-yards at Nis. 24 Liberators, baulked by the weather of their proper targets in Yugoslavia, dropped 94 tons of bombs on chance targets. Fifteen heavy bombers were lost during the day's operations.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Command	Land Recce.	Fighters (Shipping protection shown in brackets)	Bomber Totals Day / Night
M.A.A.F. @ $ (excl. M.E.)	2699ø	20788ø (1577)	951 / 112*
			244 / 634*
			649 / 800
			4363 / 22
HQ	148ø	960ø (584)	- / 18
			1 / 1
			3 / —
			—
TOTALS	2847	21748 (2161)	9259 / 1587

52 every 24 hours

Digitized by Google

TABLE II

Approximate number of sorties flown against and bombloads dropped on targets in Italy, other than Ports, dawn 12th May to dawn 15th May, 1944

	Dawn 12th May to Dawn 13th May		Dawn 13th May to Dawn 15th May	
	Sorties	Bombloads in tons	Sorties	Bombloads in tons
Direct Air Support in Battle Area				
M.A.T.A.F.				
Direct Air Support Targets	716	641	945	606.4
Total (a)	716	641	945	606.4
North of the Battle Area				
M.A.T.A.F.				
Railways, motor transport, roads,	194	99.9	809	721.2
Dumps	10	5.4	37	19.2
Total (b)	204	105.3	846	740.4
M.A.S.A.F.				
Enemy Headquarters	134	329.9	—	—
Airfields	34	91	220	457.9
Marshalling-yards	189	402.7	1,093	2,307.4
Other Railway Targets	—	—	199	457.6
Oil Refinery	—	—	5	12.5
Miscellaneous Targets	—	—	12	27.7
Total (c)	357	823.6	1,529	3,263.1
M.A.C.A.F.				
Miscellaneous Targets	—	—	6	1.3
Total (d)	—	—	6	1.3
Grand Total of (a), (b), (c), (d)	1,277	1,569.9	3,326	4,611.2

Digitized by Google

TABLE III

Approximate number of sorties flown against and bombloads dropped on targets in Italy, other than Ports, during the period dawn 15th to dawn 19th May, 1944

AIR FORCE	RAILWAY TARGETS	M.T. and ROADS	TOWNS	DUMPS	AIRFIELDS	GUNS	ENEMY H.Q. & CMD POSTS	MISC.	TOTALS
				North of the battle area					
M.A.S.A.F. H.B. (Day)	38(81.5)								38(81.5)
M.A.S.A.F. M.B. (Night)								4(7.0)	4(7.0)
M.A.T.A.F. M.B. (Day)	437(737.6)	12(14.7)			70(84.0)			4(7.1)	523(843.4)
*M.A.T.A.F. L.B. (Day)				24(16.0)					24(16.0)
M.A.T.A.F. L.B. (Night)		52(41.7)						12(10.0)	64(51.7)
M.A.T.A.F. F.B.	844(409.1)	47(10.5)	60(48.2)		20(8.8)				971(476.6)
TOTALS	1319(1228.2)	111(66.9)	60(48.2)	24(16.0)	90(92.8)			20(24.1)	1624(1476.2)
				Within the battle area (Direct air support)					
M.A.S.A.F. H.B. (Night) and M.B. (Night)		78(129.1)							78(129.1)
M.A.T.A.F. M.B. (Day)		95(158.0)							95(158.0)
*M.A.T.A.F. L.B. (Day)				48(34.0)		160(120.5)	48(34.7)		256(189.2)
M.A.T.A.F. L.B. (Night)		49(34.1)						12(10.3)	61(44.4)
M.A.T.A.F. F.B.		736(251.1)	298(114.5)			243(90.6)	66(31.4)	12(7.1)	1355(494.7)
TOTALS		958(572.3)	298(114.5)	48(34.0)		403(211.1)	114(66.1)	24(17.4)	1845(1015.4)
GRAND TOTALS	1319(1228.2)	1069(639.2)	358(162.7)	72(50.0)	90(92.8)	403(211.1)	114(66.1)	44(41.5)	3469(2491.6) @

NOTES 1. For convenience, throughout this volume in Tables similar to this one associated targets have been grouped under the appropriate heading, for example: '*M.T.* and *ROADS*' include tanks, A.F.V.s, motor-cycles and horse-drawn vehicles, etc.; '*DUMPS*' include supply depots, stores, loading points, etc.; '*GUNS*' include mortars, machine guns, *nebelwerfer*, etc.; '*TROOPS*' (from Chapter IV onwards) include targets described as strongholds, strongpoints, enemy positions, defended positions and defended or occupied buildings, etc.; '*ENEMY H.Q. & CMD posts*' include forward control and observation posts, etc.; '*MISC.*' include barracks, bivouac areas, factories and buildings not known to be occupied, radar installations and sites, etc.

2. In some instances, in the documents available to us, attacks on several different types of target have been set against a total of aircraft sorties flown and a total bombload dropped. In each of these instances, which involve only a minor proportion of a day's total air activities, approximations of the effort flown against and of the bombload dropped on each type of target have been calculated. They are considered reasonably accurate for our purpose, bearing in mind that this problem is almost entirely confined to the fighter-bombers the comparatively small bombloads of which reduce the possible margin of error. In the aggregate it is negligible.

@ Does not include 36 sorties expended on supply dropping in the battle area.

* Another Baltimore squadron (No. 13 Royal Hellenic Air Force) joined D.A.F. from the Middle East on 17th May, 1944.

Digitized by Google

Between 15th and 18th May M.A.T.A.F.'s medium day bombers flew 437 sorties and dropped 738 tons of bombs on railway targets in central Italy, besides attacking ports. The attacks put out of action for the time being the railways between Florence and Rome, between Pisa and Empoli, and between Pescara and Rome. 70 Mitchells and some Thunderbolts dropped over ninety tons on airfields at Viterbo and Tuscania. The fighter-bombers made the largest contribution to the 1,015 tons of bombs dropped during the four days, on roads, road bridges, and motor transport in the area of battle. On 17th May the medium day bombers joined the fighter-bombers in attacking road bridges and junctions at Frosinone, Ceprano, Isoletta, and Cassino, and this day marks the beginning of the systematic blocking of roads which was soon to become such a scourge of the German forces in their retreat towards Rome. The light bombers joined the fighter-bombers in attacking German artillery positions at Pico, Pontecorvo, Aquino, Roccasecca, and Castrocielo, which by 15th May had become more important targets than those near Atina. Between 15th and 18th May 8th Army's formations, mainly the Polish Corps, called for direct air support about fifty times, and the Cabrank also was much employed.

As regards the German Air Force in Italy the demands of other fronts received priority and so air commanders in Italy husbanded their shrinking forces. An interesting exception to the general ineffectiveness was the use of small numbers, perhaps twenty at a time, of Ju. 88s to replace Stukas in night attacks on targets in the battlefield. But the German air effort was very small and the Allied attacks on Piacenza and Viterbo airfields were probably the immediate cause of this state of affairs.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

5th AND 8th ARMIES BREAK THE HITLER LINE (19th to 25th MAY 1944)

(i)

See Maps 2 and 9

IN the seven days from 12th to 18th May 5th and 8th Armies had hammered their way through the Gustav Line between the west coast and the Cassino massif. By 19th May Alexander was able to say that his operations were taking the shape which he had designed in order 'To destroy the right wing of the German Tenth Army; to drive what remains of it and the German Fourteenth Army North of Rome . . . '[1]

On 22nd May von Vietinghoff believed that *AOK 10* had suffered at least 10,000 casualties since 12th May, and this figure is almost certainly an under-estimate. The arrival at the front of promised reinforcements was moreover haphazard and unpredictable, due to the Allies' constant air attacks.[2] So Alexander's land and air forces were well on the way to achieving his intention, although he had not yet committed his full strength. Mr. Churchill had good reasons for signalling to Alexander on 17th May 'I congratulate you whole-heartedly on the fine advance made along your whole front . . . ', and on the 22nd 'Delighted to watch your constant progress. The only thing that matters is the reduction of enemy's armed forces everywhere. Myself, I think you have got them . . . '[3]

On 18th May Alexander described his next steps in a signal to the Prime Minister, repeated to Sir Alan Brooke:[4]

> '. . . When the right moment comes the Americans will punch out [from Anzio] to get astride the enemy's communications to Rome. If successful this may well prove decisive.
> The intention is NOT only to keep up the present pressure on the main battle front but to step it up. I have ordered Eighth Army to use the utmost energy to break through the Adolf Hitler Line in the Liri Valley before the Germans have time to settle down in it. I have also directed that the Poles press on at once

Digitized by Google

> to Piedimonte so as to turn this line from the North. And I have directed that the French Corps, after reaching Pico, turn north and come in behind the enemy facing Eighth Army. If these manoeuvres are successful it will go a long way towards destroying the right wing of the German Tenth Army. If we get held up in front of the Adolf Hitler Line and are unable to turn it from North or South, a full scale mounted attack will be necessary to break it . . . You may be sure that there will be NO unnecessary delay. The Germans are very quick to regain their balance and I have NO intention of allowing him [*sic*] to do so . . .'

On the German side, Kesselring had been on the defensive since *AOK 14* had failed to dislodge 6th U.S. Corps from the Anzio beachhead in February 1944. By May his only means of regaining lost initiative was to create a powerful reserve and with it to launch a counter-offensive at the right time and place. These measures were not within his power. Alexander's deception plans had enticed him into putting his mobile reserve divisions in the wrong places, and by 18th May he had committed two of them in a piecemeal fashion. His other attempts at immediate reinforcement, by bringing 305th and 334th Infantry Divisions from the Adriatic coast, were constantly delayed by the Allied air forces. Kesselring moreover was usually unwilling to withdraw in order to rebound, in the manner of Rommel, perhaps because German tactical doctrine in 1944 was that withdrawal was justifiable only when all possibilities of a successful offensive or even of holding action had vanished.*[5] Moreover, the Italian topography was ideally suited to methodical defensive fighting with slow deliberate withdrawals of the type favoured by Kesselring. Even if he had been willing to disengage and withdraw with a view towards rebounding violently, Hitler put the manoeuvre out of court by decreeing, on 24th May, that there would be no more retreats in Italy without Kesselring's express sanction or his own if possible.[6] Kesselring tried to obey this decree.

For the longer term, Hitler had already decided to continue to reinforce Kesselring's Army Group.† On 18th May the whole of 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division was ordered to move to Italy from Hungary, and on 22nd May 20th *Luftwaffe* Field Division was ordered to move from Denmark to Italy.‡ On 24th May 42nd Jäger

* Kesselring has mentioned another circumstance which may have influenced German strategy in Italy: 'With every step the Allies advanced towards the north the conditions for an air war on southern Germany improved.' *Memoirs* (London 1953) p. 191.

† See Chapter III p. 127–8 for the reinforcements ordered by Hitler up to 16th May.

‡ *Luftwaffe* Field Divisions were instituted by Göring in the autumn of 1942 for use mainly in Russia. Officers and men were supplied by voluntary or compulsory transfers from those in the German Air Force who had been unable to qualify as aircrew, and from its groundsmen. In the autumn of 1942 when about 22 divisions had been formed or were forming, all were taken into the German Army. Each was organized as an ordinary infantry division. Their quality varied.

Digitized by Google

Division was ordered from Croatia to Genoa. On 1st June *OKW* promised Kesselring ten *Marsch* battalions and undertook to complete 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, and 42nd Jäger Division to full war establishment. On 2nd June, 19th *Luftwaffe* Field Division was ordered from Bruges to Italy, as were three Mountain Warfare Training Schools from Germany which were to release for the front line three Alpine battalions then stationed in the Apennines. On this date too Kesselring's usual allotment of tanks was increased by 97 Tigers and 20 Panthers. Even if all these reinforcements had reached Kesselring quickly, it may be doubted whether he would have been able to use them well. In the battle for Rome he was not fulfilling the promise which he had shown during his first five months as Commander-in-Chief South-West.* He seems to have interfered in his subordinate commanders' plans, bombarding these often harassed officers with orders which often proved to be impracticable and censuring them when they could not obey. On 22nd May he removed Major-General Steinmetz from command of 94th Infantry Division and replaced him by Lieutenant-General Klett against the advice of von Senger, Steinmetz's Corps Commander.[7] By this time indeed Kesselring had become enraged with virtually every divisional commander in *AOK 10* except Baade (90th Panzer Grenadier Division) and Heidrich (1st Parachute Division). He had been on bad terms with von Mackensen for several months and obtained his dismissal by early June. In this battle Kesselring was by turns fussy, vituperative, and sanguine and did little to help or inspire his subordinates. The weight and persistence of Alexander's offensive seem to have robbed him of the personal poise which he had displayed at Anzio in January 1944, and would again display after the fall of Rome.

(ii)

The second phase of the battle for Rome opens on the Allies' side with almost simultaneous operations by four Corps, two in 5th Army and two in 8th Army. Before we describe each Corps' operations in detail it is helpful to sketch the whole phase in broad outline. In 5th Army the French Expeditionary Corps continued to overcome the mountains and its adversaries at a fine pace and its unflagging advance was one of the principal forces which levered the enemy out of one position after another. 2nd U.S. Corps fought hard and marched hard along Highway 7, the Appian Way, and across the foothills which overlooked it. On 23rd May the capture

* For Kesselring's promise as C.-in-C. South-West see *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V, p. 521.

Digitized by Google

of Terracina by the Americans, and the capture of Pico by the French on the 22nd resulted, broadly speaking, in the collapse of the Hitler Line between the River Liri and the sea. In 8th Army the Canadian Corps and 13th Corps, moving laboriously because they were crammed into the funnel that was the Liri valley, broke the Hitler Line from Pontecorvo almost to Aquino on 24th May. On 25th May the Canadians secured bridgeheads over the River Melfa, the first defended obstacle in the Sacco valley. The operations of the two Armies spread over a front of a little more than fifty-two miles, and if we take a bird's eye view we see 5th and 8th Armies advancing towards Rome in echelon, 5th Army, on the left, leading.

The operations of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* were a patchwork. Kesselring and his subordinates were always trying and failing, to form and hold a line south of Rome. Their greatest anxieties arose from 5th Army's operations in the borderland between the right flank of *AOK 10* and the left flank of *AOK 14*, and they were much less worried by 8th Army's frontal advance up the Liri and Sacco valleys. It is true that since 25th January *AOK 14* had been responsible for coastal defence as far south as Terracina but von Mackensen had taken this responsibility fairly lightly, and had given nearly all his attention to 6th U.S. Corps' beachhead at Anzio.[8] On 19th May the Chiefs of Staff of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* awoke to the fact that the area between Terracina and Fondi was very weakly defended but neither officer would admit that he could spare troops to fill the gap. Hauser and von Mackensen then turned to Westphal and Kesselring, to plead that *AOK 14* be given 29th Panzer Grenadier Division which was still in reserve north of Rome. Kesselring hesitated, but agreed on the evening of 20th May that this Division could be placed under von Mackensen's command for defence of the weak spots in his borderland. In a directive issued on 21st May he also increased *AOK 14's* front. The boundary between *AOK 14* and *AOK 10* (which is shown on *Map 11*) was to be the line Sperlonga (on the coast between Terracina and Gaeta)–Passo della Quercia–Castro dei Volsci–Ceccano–Sgurgola–Fonte Masona (near Colleferro). This order gave to a protesting von Mackensen two fronts to defend: one facing 6th U.S. Corps, the other facing 2nd U.S. Corps and the F.E.C. The defence of these fronts presented two awkward problems. First, any force which von Mackensen disposed to face 2nd U.S. Corps and the F.E.C. might have its communications cut by a north-easterly thrust by 6th U.S. Corps. Second, attacks by 2nd U.S. Corps probably, and by the F.E.C. certainly, would fall upon the vulnerable area between *AOK 14's* left and *AOK 10's* right. von Mackensen and von Vietinghoff were of course supposed to concert the defence of this mountainous area but this was more easily said than done.

Digitized by Google

See Map 9

On 18th May Clark ordered 2nd U.S. Corps to regroup in readiness either to advance from Itri to Fondi and Terracina or to turn almost north on the axis of the road Itri–Fondi–Lenola–Castro dei Volsci.[9] Keyes was to prepare to transfer 85th U.S. Division to Anzio and was not to use it in operations west of Formia without Clark's permission. On 18th May Clark also began to move 36th U.S. Division to Anzio and then it became clear that there were not enough tank landing ships to move 85th U.S. Division as well without too great a delay. He decided therefore to use the whole of 2nd U.S. Corps to thrust along Highway 7 in order to open a land route to Anzio. This plan was supported by his Intelligence Staff's opinion that 14th Panzer Corps would not now be able to make a stand east of Terracina and very probably not at Terracina. Clark then released 85th U.S. Division for Keyes to use as he pleased and ordered him to thrust through Terracina and open a route to Anzio with the utmost speed. Keyes therefore continued to advance with the immediate object of cutting the lateral road Sezze–Frosinone in order to prevent the German armies from helping each other with reinforcements. 85th U.S. Division was directed on Sezze and 88th U.S. Division on Roccagorga (*see Map 2*).

The French Expeditionary Corps' task was to take Pico and the hills around it and then to be ready to advance north-westwards on Ceprano or westwards on Mt Siserno, overlooking Ceccano.[10] Juin meanwhile had come to think that he faced nothing greater than a strong German rearguard, and that his best course was to continue to outflank the right of the German forces in the Liri valley. He therefore set his course north-westerly: the Mountain Corps to move towards Castro dei Volsci; 3rd Algerian Infantry Division towards Ceprano. Pico however proved a hard nut to crack and was not taken until 22nd May. On that day Clark and Juin discussed the next French moves in the light of Alexander's decision that on 23rd May 6th U.S. Corps would strike out from its beachhead and that 8th Army would attack the Hitler Line north of Pontecorvo. Clark and Juin changed little in the latter's plans except to direct the Mountain Corps to follow a more westerly line: Lenola–Vallecorsa–Amaseno.

To complete the account of the plans of the Allied Army commanders we must glance at 8th Army. Here the Canadian Corps was to pass through 8th Indian Division and then to advance to the Hitler Line, moving in the southern part of the Liri valley, and 13th Corps was to push forward, a division to begin with (78th), through the northern part of the Liri valley to the Hitler Line in the neighbourhood of Aquino. There was a chance that the Germans

Digitized by Google

might be 'bounced' out of their position, but if this did not happen, 8th Army was to mount a deliberate attack.

At this point we must expand what has been said of the German side, and make a point which must be borne in mind. Kesselring's Armies were so off-balance that events in the field nearly always overtook the orders of the higher commanders and therefore the troops very often could not carry out the orders which they received. To talk of divisions, even of regiments, can give a false impression because the German formations became so fragmented. What remained intact was the resolute and obstinate spirit with which the German soldiers fought their losing battles. Many orders given by Kesselring, von Vietinghoff and the Corps commanders gave general phase lines for the purposes of co-ordination. These general orders had no sooner been given than they were altered in detail, which makes following events hard work for the reader.

Kesselring, von Vietinghoff, and von Senger met at *AOK 10's* headquarters on the afternoon of 19th May.[11] They agreed that Clark was likely to try to link the main body of his army with 6th U.S. Corps by piercing and turning the German right flank near the coast. They foresaw also that the French Expeditionary Corps ('those damned French hanging round our necks' said Westphal) would attack Pico with a view to entering the Liri valley, and they agreed that, at the moment, the French were the greater danger. Plans to counter the various dangers were made and von Vietinghoff at once issued orders which were confirmed or expanded in directives issued by Kesselring on 20th and 21st May.

The gist of von Vietinghoff's orders was as follows. During the night 19th/20th May 14th Panzer Corps was to regroup in order to defend, as its main effort, a line which ran from the neighbourhood of Mt Appiolo to Pico and Pontecorvo, a distance of about eleven crow-flight miles. All available reserves, including reinforcements, were to be used to defend this line. Kesselring's directive of 20th May added that *AOK 10* was particularly to ensure that Lenola, two miles west of Mt Appiolo, was held because it was a key position commanding the secondary roads which led north to Castro dei Volsci, and south-west to Highway 7 and Terracina. All roads and passes through the Ausoni mountains were to be blocked. Moreover for still greater security *AOK 10* was to prepare a second defensive line running Cima del Monte–Lenola–S. Giovanni–Roccasecca railway station on the Melfa river.*

* The S. Giovanni here mentioned was about three miles north-west of Pontecorvo, and must not be confused with S. Giovanni Incarico south of the Liri some miles due north of Pico.

Digitized by Google

51st Mountain Corps and 14th Panzer Corps were engaged in heavy fighting on 20th and 21st May and in Kesselring's opinion von Vietinghoff had too much on his hands to be able to secure the inter-Army boundary properly.[12] As we have seen, this dilemma led Kesselring to give 29th Panzer Grenadier Division to *AOK 14*, and on 21st May to issue the directive on the new Army boundary which increased von Mackensen's front. To issue directives is one thing but to carry them out is quite another. 29th Panzer Grenadier Division for various reasons, which are shortly to be related, arrived in the threatened area in driblets and too slowly. However von Senger, who since the discussions of the 19th was well aware of the general situation and its dangers, had issued on 20th May orders for a stopgap defence. These reflected some changes in sector command which took effect on 19th May. Raapke of 71st Infantry Division then handed his sector over to von Lüttwitz of 26th Panzer Division, and Rodt of 15th Panzer Grenadier Division replaced Ortner in control of the sector between 26th Panzer and 94th Infantry Divisions. von Senger ordered on the 20th that 14th Panzer Corps was to hold a line, nearly twenty-three miles long, Torre Canneto (on the coast a little more than a mile east of Terracina)–Mt Appiolo–Pico–Pontecorvo. 94th Infantry Division (Steinmetz not yet replaced by Klett) was to hold twelve miles of mountainous country from Torre Canneto to Mt Appiolo, 15th Panzer Grenadier Division (Rodt) a four-mile sector from Mt Appiolo to Mt Pastenese; 26th Panzer Division (von Lüttwitz) the seven miles from Mt Pastenese to Campolato which was a little south of Pontecorvo, itself to be defended by 90th Panzer Grenadier Division which was now under von Senger's command.* Monte S. Biagio and Lenola were specified as strongpoints each to be held by a battalion. The directives and orders issued by Kesselring, von Vietinghoff, and von Senger were probably the best improvisations which could be devised in the circumstances. The sectors look wide for the weakened formations allotted to them, but the mountainous nature of the country gave the defenders every advantage.† The German com-

* On 18th May it was decided to place 90th Panzer Grenadier Division under command of 14th Panzer Corps to enable one Corps commander to control operations on both banks of the Liri. This arrangement lasted until 21st May when the Division reverted to 51st Mountain Corps.[13]

† Some strength returns exist, dated 20th May.[14]

Formation or Unit	*Total Fighting Strength*
94th Infantry Division	
267th, 274th, 276th Grenadier Regiments	740
15th Panzer Grenadier Division (Miscellaneous units)	
2nd and 3rd Battalions, 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment 3rd Alpine Battalion 400th Reconnaissance Battalion 1st Battalion, 134th Grenadier Regiment	405 in all

Continued overleaf

Digitized by Google

manders could not however stabilise their front with these *ad hoc* measures for they were being out-generalled though not, as yet, out-fought.

(iii)

In describing the state of the battle from the viewpoints of the Allied and German Army and Corps commanders we have moved ahead of events in the field. And so to the field we must return, first of all to 2nd U.S. Corps, to the French Expeditionary Corps, and to the German formations which faced them.[15]

On 19th May 88th and 85th U.S. Divisions faced Steinmetz's 94th Infantry Division which had been ordered to occupy, during the night 18th/19th May, a line running from Mt Moneta near the coast northwards to Mt Lorigno (*see Map 9*). In fact the division had already withdrawn to westward of this line and on 19th May was occupying temporary positions between a point south-west of Fondi and Mt Crispi, with detachments of about a battalion each at Monte S. Biagio and Torre Canneto. On 19th May von Vietinghoff's orders indicated Mt Passignano as the next area which the division would hold, but on 20th May von Senger's stopgap orders assigned it to the twelve miles of mountains between Torre Canneto and Mt Appiolo. Before these orders could be carried out, 2nd U.S. Corps was advancing to contact.

At 1 a.m. on 20th May 349th Infantry of 88th U.S. Division marched from Itri along Highway 7 with orders to capture Fondi, about eight miles distant. 350th Infantry followed 349th, and 351st Infantry moved northwards along the Itri–Pico road. At about noon 3rd Battalion, 349th Infantry had reached a point about two miles east of Fondi where it was shelled and fired on by machine guns. The battalion mounted an attack, and by 4 p.m. the enemy, either 2nd or 3rd Battalion 274th Grenadier Regiment, withdrew north-

---

Continued

26th Panzer Division	
26th Panzer Regiment	678
9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment	367
67th Panzer Grenadier Regiment	1,164
1st Battalion, 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment	389
1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment	1,147
Nagel Battle Group	153

26th Panzer Division's total fighting strength of 3,745 was owing to reinforcement by 1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and the fact that 26th Panzer Regiment and 67th Panzer Grenadier Regiment had so far escaped heavy casualties.

Digitized by Google

wards.* The rest of 349th Infantry followed, and occupied Mt Passignano late in the day. 3rd Battalion, 351st Infantry also reached Passignano and was joined there by its 2nd Battalion on 21st May. On this day 349th Infantry pushed onwards about two miles in a north-westerly direction and captured Cima del Monte after a sharp engagement. 2nd Battalion then went on towards Monsicardi. 88th Division's other two regiments also were progressing well. On 21st May 1st Battalion, 351st Infantry on 349th Infantry's right, took Mt Valletonda. On 349th Infantry's left, 350th Infantry passed north-westward through Fondi and captured Mt Calvo in a stiff engagement which yielded over one hundred prisoners. On 22nd May the advance north and north-west continued. 2nd Battalion, 349th Infantry occupied Monsicardi, and 3rd Battalion, 351st Infantry went northwards from Mt Passignano to Mt Chiavino, west of Lenola. On the left of 349th Infantry, the 350th moved north-westward from Mt Calvo towards Roccasecca dei Volsci, eight miles away. By the end of 22nd May therefore 88th U.S. Division had gained a line, west to east, Mt Calvo–Monsicardi–Mt Chiavino, and had broken through the centre of the line Torre Canneto–Mt Appiolo which 94th Infantry Division had been ordered by von Senger to hold. Moreover the southern end of this line, on the coast, was seriously endangered by 85th U.S. Division's advance on Terracina.

In this quarter 85th U.S. Division had cleared the hills between Gaeta and Sperlonga of forlorn pockets of Germans on 20th May. On 21st May 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry embarked on a flotilla of DUKWs at Gaeta and landed, unopposed, at Sperlonga. On shore, 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry, 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, and detachments of tanks and anti-tank guns headed towards Terracina along Highway 7. 2nd and 3rd Battalions on nearly the same route, took Monte S. Biagio and then struck through the hills north-westwards to Mt Copiccio. Nature has placed obstacles in the way of a force which approaches Terracina from the east along Highway 7. North of the road stand Mt Giusto and Mt Croce and south of it Lake Fondi fills a large part of the marshy coastal plain. Part of the town of Terracina is built on a high ridge which the mountains thrust, like a finger, towards the sea. The Germans however were not yet holding Mt Guisto and Mt Croce in any strength and American patrols reached the outskirts of Terracina on 21st May. There resistance quickly stiffened and the patrols were driven back to Mt Croce, where 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry had taken post. During the night 21st/22nd May the Germans so

* *AOK 10's* War Diary names 2nd Battalion, but the day's telephone messages and Kesselring's situation report refer to the battalion as the 3rd.

Digitized by Google

thoroughly infiltrated the American positions on Mt Croce that the infantry were forced to withdraw. In the skirmishes of 21st May and the following night some Germans were captured who belonged to 15th and 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiments of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division, and the American commanders assumed that that division was in the neighbourhood.

This assumption was not correct. We have already noticed (in the previous section) that Kesselring did not issue the orders which gave 29th Panzer Grenadier Division to *AOK 14* until the evening of 20th May.[16] The division's destination was not however settled until the early hours of 21st May. Continual air attacks greatly delayed the division's moves and not more than a couple of companies reached the neighbourhood of Terracina by the evening of 21st May, when the Americans captured Cima del Monte. The German force already in Terracina was composed of the remnants of 1st Battalion, 274th Grenadier Regiment, of 1st Battalion 276th Grenadier Regiment, and of a replacement battalion.[17]

General Coulter, commander of 85th U.S. Division, believed that he faced the whole of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division at Terracina and therefore decided that his attack would be a set-piece combining a frontal attack on Mt Croce and the town with a wide turning movement with his right across Mt S. Stefano and Mt Leano and then down to cut Highway 7 west of the town.[18] His artillery support was ample because most of the guns of 2nd U.S. Corps had moved forward to Fondi while a battery of the heavy 240-mm howitzers and one 8-inch gun had come even further forward to Monte S. Biagio.

At 3.30 p.m. on 22nd May 1st and 3rd Battalions, 337th Infantry advanced upon Mt Croce and a dour, slow action began amongst the rocks and scrub, where German machine gun nests had to be destroyed almost one by one and snipers had to be stalked and killed. By nightfall the leading infantry had crossed the mountain and were forcing their way towards the town. The outflanking force, 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 338th Infantry climbed Mt S. Stefano and became engaged until nightfall with a battalion of 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which rather surprisingly, appeared from the Mt d'Orso railway tunnel. By a kind of common consent the exhausted troops on both sides suspended the battle for Terracina during the hours of darkness but at 6 a.m. on 23rd May it began as bitterly as before. The outflanking force, 338th Infantry, renewed its assaults and advanced steadily towards Mt Leano. At 8 a.m. 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 337th Infantry and 760th Tank Battalion resumed the direct attack on Terracina and, reinforced by 2nd Battalion 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, all day long the German infantry resisted savagely, giving ground only yard by yard

Digitized by Google

on slopes swept by fire from guns, mortars, and machine guns. By midnight 23rd/24th May 337th Infantry fought its way to the outskirts of Terracina, and the Germans slipped away to avoid being crushed between the American frontal and flank attacks. Retreat was the more imperative because on 23rd May 85th U.S. Division's 339th Infantry, after crossing very rugged country from Monte S. Biagio, swept into Sonnino, expelling 3rd Battalion, 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment.

In this fashion 2nd U.S. Corps broke what may be called the coastal sector of the Hitler Line. It is perhaps ironical that Kesselring, who was largely responsible for the late and piecemeal arrival of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division, had told *AOK 14* on 22nd May that this division must either hold or recapture the line Terracina–Mt delle Fate–Monsicardi–Lenola on 23rd May.

We must now turn to the operations which the French Expeditionary Corps had been conducting against Pico.

On 18th May the French Expeditionary Corps pushed its front northwards. On the right 1st French Infantry Division took Mt Calvo and Mt S. Maria on the northern side of the Mt d'Oro feature (*Map 5*); in the centre 3rd Algerian Infantry Division took Mt d'Oro, Monticelli and S. Oliva; and on the left the Mountain Corps reached Mt Croce and four miles south of it, Mt le Pezze, thus dominating a stretch of the Itri–Pico road and forming a shield against attacks by German troops west of that road.[19] During the evening of 18th May Juin ordered 3rd Algerian Infantry Division to take Pico and be ready to exploit towards Ceprano. 1st French Infantry Division was to protect the right flank and the Mountain Corps the left. On 19th May 1st French Infantry Division came down from its hills and crossed the Forma Quesa stream but was then checked by part of 26th Panzer Division and the remnant of the Nagel Battle Group. In the centre 3rd Algerian Division advanced to Mt della Comune and Mt Cozonella, and on the left the Mountain Corps beat off a counter-attack on Mt Croce, hastily made by 2nd Battalion, 67th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 400th Reconnaissance Battalion and some scout cars from 26th Panzer Division.

On 19th May Juin made an interesting review of the battle for his subordinates and enlarged a little on his intentions, which we have mentioned briefly (p. 167). He calculated that so far the Allied armies had destroyed about five German divisions and the equivalent of another two regiments, and that 26th Panzer Division, thrown hastily into battle, was already badly mauled. Because the Hitler Line between Aquino and Pontecorvo was on the point of being

Digitized by Google

penetrated by the Canadians and turned by the French, it was no longer a position on which the Germans could rally. Their only course was to fight delaying actions and to rally on the line Valmontone–Velletri–perimeter of the Anzio beachhead. His own best course was to continue to outflank the German forces in the Liri valley by advancing through the Aurunci and Ausoni mountains in conjunction with a Canadian advance north of Pontecorvo, and covered on the left by 2nd U.S. Corps advancing on the axis Itri–Fondi–Terracina. He believed that the Allies were on the eve of a great victory and saw his own Corps as the principal instrument of victory. He hoped that his Allies would not relax their efforts. He directed 3rd Algerian Infantry Division to advance towards Ceprano, and the Mountain Corps towards Castro dei Volsci. 1st French Infantry Division would come into reserve as soon as the Canadians reached the Melfa.

General de Monsabert planned to capture Pico using the 3rd Algerian Infantry Regiment to advance from Mt della Comune and Mt Cozonella to cut the Pico–Pontecorvo road and to capture the steep pyramid of Mt Leucio beyond, while the 7th Algerian Infantry Regiment captured Pico and the hills immediately east and west of it. The mobile Bonjour Group would then pass through, making first for S. Giovanni Incarico, about four miles away, and then for Ceprano, four miles further.*

On 20th May 3rd Algerian Infantry drove 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and Nagel's handful of men, together the equivalent of a single battalion, from Mt Leucio, thereby penetrating the German defences to about three thousand yards. 7th Algerian Infantry Regiment's preparations for its attack were not complete and so it only patrolled towards Pico. Part of the Mountain Corps advanced northwards to Mt Fontanino but an attempt to exploit to Montecelli di S. Onofrio was halted by 1st Battalion, 134th Grenadier Regiment. The Dodelier Armoured Group, which was advancing northwards along the Itri–Pico road, also was checked by German anti-tank guns.†

On hearing that Mt Leucio had been lost von Senger ordered von Lüttwitz (26th Panzer Division) to occupy a switch-line between Campo dei Morti and the Matrice stream.[20] He hoped to launch 1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment from this line to recapture Mt Leucio on 21st May. However on 20th May only two companies

---

* The Bonjour Group was named after its commander, Colonel Bonjour, 3rd Algerian Reconnaissance Regiment. It was supported by 756th U.S. Tank Battalion, (less company).

† Major Dodelier's Armoured Group was composed of one company, 756th U.S. Tank Battalion, two companies, 4th Moroccan Reconnaissance Regiment, one squadron 8th Anti-Tank Regiment (Chausseurs d'Afrique).

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

of this regiment had reached the battlefield, and so a detachment from 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and the 1st Battalions of 577th and 578th Grenadier Regiments were posted in the switch-line.* This was a timely precaution because 1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment had been seriously delayed. von Senger was very worried by his want of reserves.

That lively observer General Chambe has described 21st May as *'une journée très dure'*.[23] The Mountain Corps was advancing northwards and westwards, and Mt Appiolo, held by the German 3rd Alpine Battalion, saw savage fighting. The feature changed hands several times but at last fell to the French. Dodelier's Armoured Group then advanced up the Itri–Pico road, driving 2nd Battalion 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment northwards, almost to the road-fork west of Montecelli di S. Onofrio. A little to the north-east of this feature 1st Battalion, 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment held its position firmly as it had done on the 20th. As well as advancing northwards Sevez began a fresh drive westwards by directing Guillaume's Group, 1st Moroccan Infantry Regiment and 1st Group of Tabors of Goums, on Lenola. During the day two companies of 7th Algerian Infantry from the Algerian Division infiltrated the southern outskirts of Pico, and two more companies established themselves on Pt 270, west of the town. Towards evening a counter-attack by 67th Panzer Grenadier Regiment from 26th Panzer Division and a company of Panther tanks cleared the French from Pico, and a series of counter-attacks tried to drive them from Pt 270. Time and again the slopes and crest of this little hill were criss-crossed by bright streams of tracer bullets, and the crash of bursting grenades and the yells of the combatants told of the furious but invisible struggles. Thrice the French were thrown off the hilltop and thrice they regained it, only to be thrown off once more. Then, with unbreakable spirit, the survivors attacked for the fourth time, won back the hilltop and this time held it. Meanwhile on the right of the F.E.C. a brigade of 1st French Infantry Division seized Mt Morrone and advanced towards S. Giovanni. Here towards evening they were counter-attacked by 1st Battalion, 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and 26th Panzer Regiment, and were forced back to positions between Mt Leucio and Mt Morrone.

---

* On 18th May Kesselring had ordered the following to be transferred from *AOK 14* to *AOK 10* during the nights 18th/19th and 19th/20th May.[21]

Bulk of 26th Panzer Division
1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment
60th Engineer Battalion.

The two battalions from 577th and 578th Grenadier Regiments were units of 305th Infantry Division (Hauck) which Kesselring was bringing over from the Adriatic front.[22] On 20th May this division was arriving in driblets near S. Giovanni. Hauck took over a sector on the right of 26th Panzer Division on 23rd May.

Digitized by Google

And so, although the French failed to take Pico on 21st May they had captured in Mt Appiolo, the southern bastion of the line which von Vietinghoff just two days earlier had ordered 14th Panzer Corps to hold. The French also were closing in on Lenola which Kesselring believed to be so important.

On 22nd May 3rd Algerian Infantry Division and the Mountain Corps finished the work in hand. 26th Panzer Division still held Pico and the Campo dei Morti and the Matrice stream.[24] Rodt's oddments, only in name 15th Panzer Grenadier Division, held a line west of the Itri–Pico road on Mt Trella, Mt Schierano, and Mt Cimale. By this time most of the French Expeditionary Corps' artillery, including the American 13th Field Artillery Brigade, had moved forward to the neighbourhood of S. Oliva, Monticelli, and the open ground east of Mt d'Oro.[25] de Monsabert therefore enjoyed powerful artillery support when he threw almost his whole division against Pico and both its flanks. This attack decided the battle although the German troops fought hard. 67th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was driven back to Mts Calcararo and Palinferno, north-west of Pico, and 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment to the Matrice stream. Pico passed into French hands. On the left of 3rd Algerian Infantry Division, the Mountain Corps cleared Mt Trella and Mt Schierano, and swept northwards towards Cima Alta. Guillaume's Group overran Lenola, from which only about a hundred men of 276th Grenadier Regiment escaped with their Commander Colonel von Seeler.[26] The French Expeditionary Corps had broken through its sector of the Hitler Line, and was ready to advance with unabated impetus.

(iv)

See Maps 2 *and* 10

On 15th May General Leese had committed the Canadian Corps to the battle by ordering General Burns to relieve 8th Indian Division and then to advance up the southern half of the Liri valley.[27] Thereupon Burns ordered Vokes, commander of 1st Canadian Division, to relieve and pass through the Indian Division and to advance to the Hitler Line.* The northern boundary of the

---

* (a) *1st Canadian Division* (Major-General C. Vokes) Main formations and units.
1st Infantry Brigade (Brigadier D. C. Spry): The Royal Canadian Regiment, The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, 48th Highlanders of Canada.
2nd Infantry Brigade (Brigadier T. G. Gibson): Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, The Loyal Edmonton Regiment.
3rd Infantry Brigade (Brigadier J. P. E. Bernatchez): Royal 22e Regiment, The Carleton and York Regiment, The West Nova Scotia Regiment.
Continued opposite

Digitized by Google

Canadian Corps ran westwards from a little south of S. Angelo (*Map 2*) to a point near Ponte di Castelluccio on the Forme d'Aquino and then, passing south of Aquino, to Mancini (*Map 10*). The southern boundary of the Corps was the River Liri.[28] The Canadian Corps therefore was confined to an area about three miles wide and its L. of C. consisted of farm tracks and one second-class metalled road which ran from Pignataro to Pontecorvo. This wretched L. of C. was one of the causes of the fearsome traffic jams which occurred during the operations.

1st Canadian Division formally relieved 8th Indian Division at 10.15 p.m. on 16th May, but during the day the Canadian 1st Infantry Brigade had been advancing on a front of about 2,200 yards, with its left flank close to the Liri. The country was very broken and rough although well cultivated, a patchwork of cornfields, orchards, and vineyards, studded with clumps of poplars and dwarf oaks. Two difficult obstacles lay in the Canadians' path. The first was the Spalla Bassa, a small stream in a steep-sided gully. The second was the Forme d'Aquino, a pair of streams running in a deep gully which was steep-sided in some places, and marshy in others. The Forme d'Aquino ran south-eastwards from Aquino until it met the Liri.

On 16th May 1st Infantry Brigade advanced to a line about two miles west of Pignataro against light opposition from small parties of the enemy sometimes backed by two or three self-propelled guns. Vokes wanted a quicker pace and during the night 16th/17th May he brought forward 3rd Infantry Brigade on the right of the 1st and ordered both Brigades to make a determined advance to the Hitler Line. On 17th May the battalions of 3rd Infantry Brigade leapfrogged towards the north-west. They met the same kind of opposition as had 1st Infantry Brigade on the 16th and they moved no faster. By 7 p.m. the Carleton and York Regiment reached the Forme d'Aquino about a thousand yards south-east of Ponte di Castelluccio and then made a bridgehead on the west bank. On the left flank 1st Infantry Brigade had a day's hard fighting because the remnants of 576th Grenadier Regiment and 190th Reconnaissance Battalion had dug in on the wooded ridges west of the Spalla Bassa and, well supported by guns and mortars, refused to be budged.[29] The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment spent all day in ejecting

---

C.A.C. 4th Reconnaissance Regiment (4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards).
R.C.A. 1st Field Regiment R.C.H.A.; 2nd and 3rd Field Regiments; 1st A/Tk Regiment; 2nd Light A.A. Regiment.
R.C.E. 1st, 3rd, 4th Field Companies; 2nd Field Park Company.
M.G. The Saskatoon Light Infantry.

(b) *1st Armoured Brigade* (Brigadier W. C. Murphy): 11th Armoured Regiment (The Ontario Regiment), 12th Armoured Regiment (Three Rivers Regiment), 14th Armoured Regiment (The Calgary Regiment).

Digitized by Google

them, and on the left flank 48th Highlanders had as much difficulty with their opponents. This day's stand was the Germans' last delaying action in front of the Hitler Line between Pontecorvo and Aquino because on the evening of 16th May Kesselring had agreed that it was necessary to withdraw to that line. And so, although the arrival of General Baade (90th Panzer Grenadier Division) and the remainder of his division at Aquino on the 16th was a most timely reinforcement, *AOK 10* ordered on the 17th a general withdrawal by 51st Mountain Corps to the line (north to south) Piedimonte–Ponte di Castelluccio–bend of the Liri south of Pontecorvo.[30] Baade was placed in command of a sector which stretched from Casa Caprara, about a mile south of Aquino airfield, through Colle Alto to Ponte delle Tavole south of Pontecorvo.

In consequence of the German withdrawal, 1st and 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigades advanced without trouble to the fringes of the Hitler Line on 18th May.[31] The Canadian engineers began to bridge the Forme d'Aquino and at one site a little south of Ponte di Castelluccio an incident occurred which held a warning of the traffic control problems which were to plague 8th Army's advance on Rome. A column of tanks from 16th/5th Lancers and armoured cars from 1st Derbyshire Yeomanry, both of 6th Armoured Division, strayed across the Canadians' boundary and blocked the sole track by which bridging material could be brought forward. It took more than an hour to persuade these unintentional but argumentative intruders to clear the way, and later they caused more delays by insisting on using the newly built bridge.*

On 17th May Burns had been so hopeful of a quick advance that he anticipated Leese's wishes by issuing an instruction that his Corps would breach the Hitler Line and exploit towards Frosinone. This plan depended upon rushing forward 5th Canadian Armoured Division through the breach which the Infantry Division would make in the Hitler Line.[33] But so congested were the tracks across the River Gari that it soon became clear that the Armoured Division would be unable to come forward quickly enough to take advantage of any breaches which the infantry might make in the German defences. Burns, therefore, limited his plans to breaking through the Hitler Line. However Hoffmeister, who commanded 5th Canadian Armoured Division, and his subordinates knew what their future task would be and were able to prepare for it.

While the Canadians had been advancing in the southern part of the Liri valley Kirkman had ordered Keightley to press on with

* Between 11th May and 4th June Canadian engineers built 27 Bailey bridges and opened and maintained about 235 miles of tracks and roads.[32]

Digitized by Google

78th Division in the northern part.[34] And so on the evening of 18th May the Derbyshire Yeomanry Group, followed by 36th Infantry Brigade, reached Aquino airfield and Aquino itself.* Both places were known to be part of the Hitler Line, but how strongly they might be held was uncertain. In fact the Heilmann Battle Group of 1st Parachute Division had withdrawn to them from the Cassino positions.[36] Heidrich, arrogant as ever, had unwillingly obeyed Feuerstein's order to abandon the Cassino massif, and his men were hankering for a fight to salve their wounded pride. Keightley, who had commanded 6th Armoured Division in Tunisia, was equally eager to get ahead and he ordered the Derbyshire Yeomanry Group to bounce the Germans out of Aquino during the night of 18th/19th May, but also ordered 36th Infantry Brigade to prepare for a deliberate attack if the bounce failed. 10th Rifle Brigade, backed by a few tanks, penetrated Aquino for a short distance and found the place to be a heap of rubble infested by the enemy and plainly not a position to be tackled offhand during a pitch-black night. A deliberate attack was decided upon for early on 19th May.

At first light on 19th May Brigadier James, commander of 36th Infantry Brigade, launched 5th Battalion The Buffs and 8th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders against Aquino.[37] The infantry were supported by three field regiments of artillery and by tanks of 17th/21st Lancers and of the Ontario Regiment (1st Canadian Armoured Brigade). A thick mist cloaked the field and under its cover the attack seemed to go well. Then as the sun rose, the mist lifted suddenly, exposing the infantry to observed fire from machine guns and mortars, and the tanks to anti-tank guns. It could then be seen that the German positions were very strong. Later a promising outflanking movement by the Derbyshire Yeomanry and 10th Rifle Brigade was stopped by a deep gully unmarked on their maps, and hence an unpleasant surprise. The sensible thing was done by calling off the attack, and the infantry then withdrew, covered by the Ontario Regiment. The Buffs and the Argylls together had suffered about sixty casualties and thirteen of the Ontario Regiment's tanks were knocked out. Germans had clearly managed to man the Hitler Line but how effectively had yet to be discovered.

General Leese had been disappointed by the slowness of the Canadians' advance and on 18th May he urged Burns to smarten the pace. Much was expected of the attack on Aquino on the 19th. Intelligence reports did not underrate the strength of the Hitler Line's defences but there were grounds for thinking that the

* *Derbyshire Yeomanry Group* was composed of units from 6th Armoured Division: 1st Derbyshire Yeomanry (reconnaissance regiment) less detachment; 10th Rifle Brigade (motor battalion of 26th Armoured Brigade); 17th/21st Lancers (Sherman III, 26th Armoured Brigade).[35]

Digitized by Google

Germans had been unable to man them fully. Burns, touched by the spur, in turn goaded Vokes who ordered his 3rd Infantry Brigade to capture, on 19th May, a ridge which ran alongside the road from Pontecorvo to Aquino and some five hundred yards west of it, well within the Hitler Line. 3rd Infantry Brigade was to be supported by 51st R.T.R. and, for reasons that are not clear, by no more than 1st Field Regiment R.C.H.A., and 1st Canadian A.G.R.A. on call.* The Royal 22e Regiment and the Carleton and York Regiment attacked side by side and reached an intermediate objective. Brigadier Bernatchez then decided that the available artillery was sufficient to support only one battalion. He halted the Carleton and York Regiment, and renewed the attack with the Royal 22e Regiment alone, but the task turned out to be too much for a single battalion, and so Bernatchez recalled the Royal 22e and broke off the action. On the German side Kesselring, towards midnight 19th/20th May, asked von Vietinghoff if Baade and Heidrich needed any help.[39] von Vietinghoff replied that both officers 'felt they could cope'. These two divisional commanders were earning von Vietinghoff's opinion that they were 'in a class by themselves'. They did not share Feuerstein's gloom.

The Canadian Corps and 13th Corps were now in contact with the whole of the Hitler Line stretching across the Liri valley and the events of the 19th suggested that a powerful attack would be needed to break it. As Leese had anticipated this possibility he was able to give new verbal orders without delay on 20th May for a two-phase operation.[40] He intended 'to pierce the Adolf Hitler Line and exploit towards Arce–Ceprano'. The Canadian Corps was first to breach the Hitler Line and fan out northwards and southwards to destroy its garrison. Secondly it was to seize crossings over the River Melfa. 13th Corps was to demonstrate around Aquino to deceive the enemy into thinking that 8th Army would strike its heaviest blow along Highway 6, 13th Corps was also to help the Canadian Corps as much as it could by allowing it to use tracks within 13th Corps' boundary. The Polish Corps was to send out fighting patrols to keep touch with the enemy on its front, and was to simulate attacks against Piedimonte, and against Corno on the south side of Mt Cairo. The Canadian Corps was to be ready to attack at dawn on 23rd May.

---

* The Canadian Official History follows an unpublished British historical account which was written shortly after the end of the war. This document states 'At the last moment the main weight of the Corps [Canadian] artillery had to be switched to the north to assist 13th Corps in its attack on Aquino.' This assistance is not mentioned in the War Diaries of 13th Corps, 78th Division, and 36th Infantry Brigade. This silence does not rule out the possibility that some verbal arrangement for the help of the Canadian guns was made, but was unused.[38]

Digitized by Google

Leese's plan was simple and straightforward: the Canadian Corps to break the Hitler Line and secure the Melfa crossings about five miles west of it while the other two Corps made diversions against 51st Mountain Corps' left flank. When the Canadian Corps had completed its tasks exploitation would follow on a two-Corps front: on the right 13th Corps, directed on Arce; on the left the Canadian Corps directed on Ceprano. This plan for exploitation contained seeds of trouble. Two Corps were to advance side by side along the narrow Liri valley on a front of about six miles. Even if the going was as good as it was expected to be, traffic congestion was bound to occur. In fact it turned out to be bad. Although 13th Corps would enjoy the use of one good road, Highway 6, the Canadian Corps would have to make the best of a second-class road and a few farm tracks. Leese's plan for breaking the Hitler Line had, moreover, introduced the principle that one Corps might use, at need, roads and tracks in another Corps' area. On paper this arrangement seems sensible; in practice it depends on the communication of complicated and changing movement tables to large numbers of drivers and military policemen, and on sweet reasonableness of commanders at every level. 5th Canadian Armoured Regiment wrote a comment on 24th May which is true of every day of the advance in the Liri valley and beyond.

> 'On this day, as on subsequent days . . . possession of priority on the road was of academic value only since it resulted in no diminution of other traffic, nor in the appearance of any provost [military police] aware of the fact that priority had been given.'[41]

The line which the Canadian Corps was about to attack was begotten of Hitler's direction, in mid-November 1943, that additional defences were to be built behind that part of the Gustav Line which lay between the Cassino massif and the Gulf of Gaeta.[42] By December 1943 this position was known as the *Führerriegel*, but as the collapse of a line bearing this name would obviously be meat for Allied propaganda it was abruptly re-named the *Sengerriegel* on 24th January 1944, two days after 6th U.S. Corps landed at Anzio. It is unlikely that von Senger felt flattered by the change because he believed that static defence was bad tactics, that the defences of the Hitler Line were badly sited, and that not enough troops would be available to man them. The Allies moreover unkindly persisted in calling the position the Adolf Hitler Line.

When he called it into being Hitler decreed that this position was to be of 'fortress strength', a German military expression which meant that concrete and steel were to be used in building the principal field works such as emplacements for heavy weapons,

Digitized by Google

machine gun nests, and bunkers. In early January 1944 he demanded that the work be hastened and the labour force was augmented, but progress was neither smooth nor quick. As was the case with most German defensive positions in this theatre responsibility for technical and tactical control kept changing, and on the technical side the military engineers and the quasi-military Todt Organisation were not always in harmony. The tactical requirements were endlessly debated by officers of all degrees, but they could not ensure a regular supply of materials, nor a uniform standard of work. In consequence some parts of the Hitler Line were weaker than others, and as we have seen it was soon broken in the south. The primary sources known to us for an account of the state of the Aquino–Pontecorvo sector on 23rd May are a report by the General Staff of 1st Canadian Division rather hastily compiled in the middle of operations, and a report written from memory in 1947 by the German Major-General Rothe, an engineer officer who briefly supervised the work of fortification in March 1944. These sources can be supplemented from Canadian and British War Diaries, and from the map which was prepared from contemporary air photographs. The photographic interpreters however could not accurately identify the types of all the defences—certainty could come only from inspection after capture, a job for which no one could spare much time.

The distance from Aquino to Pontecorvo is about six thousand yards which was a standard front for a German infantry division in defence. Three battalions might be expected to occupy what was called the main defensive zone. In front of this zone there were usually other positions called battle outposts, and behind it positions in a depth which might vary from eight hundred to five thousand yards depending upon the number of battalions that were available. There were no battle outposts in this part of the Hitler Line, probably because the Germans had hoped to delay the Allied troops by fighting stubborn rear-guard actions as they had so often done before when withdrawing to defensive lines. The depth of the defences was, on average, about eight hundred yards. There were no field works in greater depth probably because work on the line had been too intermittent.

There were very few natural obstacles of which the builders of the line could take advantage. The Forme d'Aquino was of little use because it did not run parallel to the line but turned off south-eastwards. The Rio S. Martino stream at the Pontecorvo end could have been used as an obstacle for reserve defensive positions in depth if there had been any.

The River Liri protected the southern flank to some extent but Pontecorvo could be outflanked as the French Expeditionary Corps

Digitized by Google

showed when it captured Cappuccini and Mt Leucio. Orchards, olive groves, copses of small trees with thick undergrowth, and standing crops hid many of the defensive positions but did not blind them because the Germans had cleared as many fields of fire as they needed. The broken nature of the ground offered many good sites for field works, and a ridge just behind the line provided good observation posts.

An anti-tank ditch, with gaps here and there, ran across the front. It had been made by blowing a string of craters each measuring from fifteen to thirty feet across. The sides of these craters had not been scarped and the ditch was a hindrance to tanks rather than a complete obstacle. A single double-apron barbed wire fence also with some gaps, ran across the whole front; at some posts the fence had been doubled or tripled and low trip-wires had been fixed. Within the wire, anti-tank mines, Teller and Italian box-mines, had been scattered rather than laid. Apart from the mines in the wire there were some patches of mines scarcely amounting to minefields, and here and there anti-personnel mines had been thrown down. Large dumps of mines were discovered after the battle which suggested that minelaying had been a hasty last-minute affair.

The fixed defences were of three main kinds. The first, something new, was the dismounted turret of a Panther tank squatting upon a plinth of brickwork and connected to a dug-out. The turret mounted a tank gun, the 7.5-cm Kwk 42 L/70, a machine gun and a rocket projector, and was manned by three men from a specially trained Turret Company which had been formed in 15th Panzer Grenadier Division. There were eight of these turrets in the sector which the Canadians attacked and each one was supported by a brace of self-propelled anti-tank guns, 7.5-cm or 8.8-cm. The second kind of fixed defence was the bunker built of steel and concrete. Each bunker held twenty men and was connected with one or two covered emplacements, each mounting a machine gun. These bunkers were sited in depth at lateral intervals of one hundred and fifty or two hundred yards. The third kind of fixed defence was the 'portable' machine gun nest. This was dome-shaped, made of steel, and six feet high, of which three feet appeared above the ground. The front armour was from 5.46 inches to 3.51 inches thick, and on top, sides, and rear was 1.56 inches. A nest mounted one gun, and there were probably ten nests on the Canadian front.

Besides these defensive works in concrete and steel, there was the usual medley of field works made by pick and shovel, and sometimes strengthened with concrete or balks of timber: dug-outs, foxholes, observation posts, crawl trenches and so on. The line was undoubtedly

Digitized by Google

strong, but not so horrifically strong as some highly-coloured propagandist descriptions have represented it.

As 51st Mountain Corps had also to watch its northern wing, it could not send fresh troops into the Hitler Line. On the morning of 23rd May the following units were in the line from Piedimonte in the north to Pontecorvo in the south. The majority were already much reduced by casualties, and as dispositional changes were so frequent their Order of Battle can only be given in outline. From north to south:

Schulz Battle Group	Remnants of 1st Parachute Regiment (1st Parachute Division) 2nd Battalion, 721st Jäger Regiment 2nd Battalion, 741st Jäger Regiment (both of 114th Jäger Division) Reconnaissance Battalion of 5th Mountain Division 242nd Assault Gun Brigade Machine gun Battalion of 1st Parachute Division Composite engineer group (four companies)
Heilmann Battle Group	4th Parachute Regiment (of 1st Parachute Division) 1st and 2nd Battalions, 3rd Parachute Regiment 1st Battalion, 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment (of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division)
Fabian Battle Group	2nd and 3rd Battalions, 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment (of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division) Engineer Battalion, 305th Infantry Division Elements 44th Replacement Battalion (of 44th Infantry Division) A/Tk companies of 5th Mountain and 114th Jäger Divisions
Straffner Battle Group	2nd Battalion, 85th Mountain Regiment (of 5th Mountain Division) Elements 80th Engineer Battalion
Bode Battle Group	1st and 2nd Battalions, 576th Grenadier Regiment (305th Infantry Division) Engineer Battalion, 334th Infantry Division Elements 190th Engineer Battalion (90th Panzer Grenadier Division) One company, 190th A/Tk Battalion Elements 44th Replacement Battalion (44th Infantry Division)

Digitized by Google

Besides these Battle Groups there were some miscellaneous units and detachments mainly of the supporting arms.*

The infantry numbered about 1,085 according to a Canadian estimate. About 150 guns and howitzers supported the position, mainly of 10.5-cm calibre, but including some of 15-cm.[44] There was an ample provision of mortars and bombs, the standard 8-cm weapons and captured Russian 12-cm. The Canadian estimates of German strength were probably too low because although 51st Mountain Corps had suffered many casualties since 11th May, it had received three battalions of 114th Jäger Division, and five companies of infantry of 5th Mountain Division had been sent to feed the battle on its southern wing.[45] In addition, the Corps had been reinforced by:

Engineer Battalions, 305th and 334th Infantry Divisions
One engineer construction battalion
One company, 1st Battalion 4th Panzer Regiment
One company, 26th Panzer Regiment (12 Pzkw IV)
56th Werfer Regiment (two batteries, 15-cm *nebelwerfer*, one battery 21-cm *nebelwerfer*)

We do not know where all these units were deployed, but we may reasonably guess that von Senger's prediction that the Hitler Line would be undermanned when it came to the crunch was true of the Aquino–Pontecorvo sector.

Vokes had known since 15th May that his division would very probably be used to break the Hitler Line to enable 5th Canadian Armoured Division to pass through. He therefore had a plan ready in anticipation of the orders which Leese and Burns issued on 20th May. Bearing in mind the armour's needs he thought that the best ground for an attack stretched from a point on the Forme d'Aquino, some fifteen hundred yards south-west of Aquino, roughly southwards to another point two thousand yards away.[46] Hoffmeister (5th Canadian Armoured Division) agreed that a breach of this size and this piece of ground would suit his armour. Vokes therefore decided to attack on this front, and planned two phases: first, to capture a part of the road Pontecorvo–Aquino; and second

* The contemporary Canadian estimate of these troops was:[48]

96th Artillery Regiment
190th Artillery Regiment
Turret Company, 15th Pz. Grenadier Division
One battery, 71st Werfer Regiment
115th Panzer Abteilung, with about 10 Pzkw IV
One company 525th Panzerjäger Abteilung (Hornets)
One battery, 907th Assault Gun Battalion
One company 114th Panzerjäger Battalion
90th Panzer Grenadier Divisional Troops
80th Engineer Battalion
85th Signal Battalion.

Digitized by Google

to capture a part of the road Pontecorvo–Highway 6 which ran parallel to the road first mentioned and from one to two thousand yards west of it. These two pieces of road in effect marked the forward and the rear edges of the Hitler Line so that when he had captured them, he would have broken through and would have made a breach for Hoffmeister's armour. He intended to use his 2nd Infantry Brigade to attack, two battalions abreast, behind a heavy barrage, and supported by the Churchill and Sherman tanks of 25th Tank Brigade.* 1st and 3rd Infantry Brigades would help by making feint attacks, and Vokes could throw them in to the main battle if the need arose.

When Leese heard Vokes's plan he advised the Canadian commanders to use more infantry in the main attack. Vokes then decided to use 3rd Infantry Brigade, with one battalion up, on the left of 2nd Infantry Brigade. He withdrew the Royal 22e Regiment from 3rd Infantry Brigade to join the Three Rivers Regiment in divisional reserve. His final dispositions for the attack were:

Right 2nd Infantry Brigade. From right to left:

(a) Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry; one squadron, North Irish Horse.

(b) Seaforth Highlanders of Canada; North Irish Horse (less one squadron). (Reserve) Loyal Edmonton Regiment; 51st R.T.R. (less two squadrons).

P.P.C.L.I. and the Seaforth were to capture the stretch of the Pontecorvo–Aquino road which lay on their front. When this objective had been taken, a pause of one hour would follow for reorganization, and then the Seaforth and the Loyal Edmonton Regiment would advance to capture the stretch of the road Pontecorvo–Highway 6 directly before them. The tanks were to co-operate closely in both attacks.

Left 3rd Infantry Brigade:

The Carleton and York Regiment; two squadrons, 51st R.T.R. As in 2nd Infantry Brigade, these units would capture the stretches of the two roads which lay in front of them, pausing for an hour between the two attacks. The West Nova Scotia Regiment would join in the second attack i.e. on the road Pontecorvo–Highway 6.

---

* *25th Tank Brigade* (Brigadier J. N. Tetley):

		Runner Tanks		
	Churchill I	Churchill III, IV	Churchill ARV	Sherman I, II
North Irish Horse	6	35	4	18
51st R.T.R.	4	26	4	12
142nd Royal Armoured Corps	5	22	3	11
	15	83	11	41

Total 150

Digitized by Google

Divisional Reserve Royal 22e Regiment.

Zero hour was to be 6 a.m. on 23rd May.

The artillery had a large programme, and deployed 786 guns for the main attack. The Canadian Corps, in addition to its own artillery, had the help of units from 13th Corps, the Polish Corps, and the French Expeditionary Corps.* Of the guns available 76 medium and heavy were reserved for counter-battery, and 28 of other types were reserved for counter-mortar shoots. 682 guns of all types were therefore available to support 1st Canadian Division.[48] The main artillery programme in support of the infantry included a barrage and a series of concentrations upon chosen strongpoints. The barrage covered a front of 3,200 yards and was carried to a depth of 3,000 yards in all, and was to be fired by nine field regiments, three medium regiments and six batteries of 155-mm howitzers. The infantry were to advance at a pace of one hundred yards in five minutes during the first phase of the attack and one hundred yards in three minutes during the second. Besides the barrage 32 concentrations were to be fired upon known strongpoints both inside and outside the area of the barrage. The main fire plan was timed to occupy 187 minutes from Z—3, including the pause of 60 minutes. The counter-battery programme directed against 46 sites of hostile batteries was to begin at Z—52. The counter-mortar programme employed three troops of field guns, four troops of heavy AA guns, and twenty-four 4.2-inch mortars of 1st Canadian Division Support Battalion. Besides these several programmes there was to be a period of artillery preparation from Z—55 to Z—45. This shoot would simulate a bombardment preceding an attack, and would, it was hoped, induce the Germans to man their guns, thus exposing their artillerymen to the counter-battery fire. The targets were chosen to mislead the enemy about the front of the real attack. So many plans required a very large amount of intense work, but the orders were issued at about 6.30 p.m. on 22nd May, and

---

* Numbers of guns and howitzers employed and ammunition allotted:[47]

Calibre	*r.p.g.*	*Canadian Corps*	*13th Corps*	*Polish Corps*	*F.E.C.*
75-mm how.	500	8	—	—	—
25-pdr	600	120	264	16	—
105-mm SP	—	48	24	—	—
105-mm	325	—	—	—	36
3.7-in. HAA	?	16	—	—	6
4.5-in.	380	32	40	16	—
5.5-in.	350	32	40	16	—
7.2-in.	175	8	8	—	—
155-mm how.	60	—	—	—	36
155-mm gun	50–100	4	8	—	—
8-in. how.	75	—	—	—	12
240-mm how.	50	—	—	—	2
Total		268	384	48	92

Digitized by Google

by noon of that day all the ammunition needed had been dumped at the guns. Meanwhile the artillery had not been silent and from late on 19th May had harassed known German strongpoints at a rate of about one thousand rounds an hour.[49]

While the 1st Canadian Division was preparing its attack (named 'Chesterfield'), Vokes began a subsidiary operation. On 20th May the French Expeditionary Corps captured Mt Leucio and was said to have set foot in the part of Pontecorvo which lay on the west bank of the Liri.* On the same morning the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards were stabbing at the defences of Pontecorvo east of the Liri and captured some extremely cowed prisoners from 44th Replacement Battalion. The French success and the prisoners' low morale led Vokes to see an opportunity. He sent Brigadier Spry (1st Infantry Brigade) to the French to discuss the possibility of passing the Royal Canadian Regiment across the Liri in assault boats, and then assailing Pontecorvo from the north-west in conjunction with an attack by the French. Spry talked it over with French commanders and decided that it would not be possible to cross the river because the Germans had dug in a large number of machine guns on the far bank. He reported his opinion to Vokes late in the afternoon of 21st May. Vokes however seems to have convinced himself that the defences of Pontecorvo were thinly manned by fourth-rate troops. He therefore ordered Spry to attack with his brigade at 10 a.m. on 22nd May. If Spry penetrated the defences Vokes intended to ask Burns for permission to attack northwards from the breach with 2nd Infantry Brigade, thus rolling up the Hitler Line from the south. He believed that this operation might give quicker and better results than 'Chesterfield'. He therefore postponed 2nd Infantry Brigade's final deployment for 'Chesterfield' until 5 p.m. on 22nd May. When this new plan reached Leese he warned Burns 'against getting too involved in this subsidiary operation'. Burns however did not restrain Vokes who, early on 22nd May, committed more troops to his new plan by ordering the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards and two squadrons 142nd R.A.C. to attack along the Pignataro–Pontecorvo road as a prelude to 1st Infantry Brigade's attack. 2nd Infantry Brigade unhappily remained in suspense about its task, which might be either to roll up the Hitler Line from the south, or to make a frontal attack upon it alongside 3rd Infantry Brigade.

* At Pontecorvo the bed of the Liri was north–south, turning west again at the north-western edge of the town.

Digitized by Google

At 7 a.m. on 22nd May the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards and the squadrons of 142nd R.A.C. penetrated the German defences for about four hundred yards before being stopped in their tracks by a minefield.[50] About sixty prisoners from the 44th Replacement Battalion were taken but three British tanks were destroyed. At 10.30 a.m. the 48th Highlanders of Canada and one squadron of 142nd R.A.C. attacked to capture Pt 106, a tree-dotted swell in the ground which stood about fifteen hundred yards north-east of Pontecorvo and some five hundred yards within the Hitler Line. Hopes of a quick win against inferior troops soon disappeared. The tanks were stopped amidst craters and patches of mines covered by anti-tank fire, and the 48th Highlanders, supported by heavy concentrations from the guns, had to fight their way yard by yard towards their objective. This they almost reached in a day-long battle, but by about 5.30 p.m. it became clear that nothing was likely to be gained by throwing in Spry's remaining two battalions. The 48th Highlanders were ordered to consolidate where they stood, and Vokes confirmed that 'Chesterfield' would begin at 6 a.m. on 23rd May. 1st Infantry Brigade had made a dent in the Hitler Line but against this small success has to be set the disadvantages which arose from the curtailment of 2nd Infantry Brigade's preparations for 'Chesterfield'. Because the brigade had been required to be ready at any moment to exploit 1st Infantry Brigade's battle, exploratory patrolling of the 'Chesterfield' area had had to stop at 2 a.m. on 22nd May. Moreover it had not been possible to allow leaders of various ranks to leave their units to carry out daylight reconnaissances during 22nd May. The Brigade consequently began 'Chesterfield' without the very valuable topographical and tactical information which complete patrolling and reconnaissance would have collected. The wait for final orders had the usual irritating and unsettling effects upon the troops.

Twenty minutes or so after sunrise is not an agreeable time at which to begin a full-dress battle. Cold food, eaten earlier, sits lumpishly on the stomach. If good management has provided a mug of tea, its warmth and consolation have fled.* During the march to the forming-up place darkness and silence cut a man off from his comrades and leave him to his own thoughts and feelings, which are often not much more than a fret about the irritation caused by a stubbed toe or chafing equipment, or by a nocturnal insect

* 'By the time orders were finished it was after 0300 hrs, and I had to decide whether to wake up my crews and tell them what little I knew, or whether to let them sleep on . . . I even wondered whether it was better to let them sleep or wake them up for a cup of tea. The cup of tea won with the tank commanders, and we had Reveille at 0445 hrs. It was a bitterly cold morning . . . ' Captain G. L. Simcox, 51st R.T.R. 23rd May.[51]

Digitized by Google

crawling round the neck. In the growing light comrades look blue, pinched and preoccupied.

At 6 a.m. on 23rd May the artillery's fire, instead of being an irrelevant noise, suddenly interested the waiting infantry because then they saw a line of sprouting shell-bursts which marked the opening line of the barrage, and the leading troops stepped off into the swirling currents of battle. In 2nd Infantry Brigade Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and 'A' Squadron of the North Irish Horse were on the right, and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada and 'B' and 'C' Squadrons of the North Irish Horse were on the left. The Loyal Edmonton Regiment and one squadron of 51st R.T.R. were in reserve, waiting for the second phase.

The first objective for P.P.C.L.I. and the Seaforth was the Pontecorvo–Aquino road about fifteen hundred yards distant from the Start Line which was a well marked track running north-eastwards from Campo Vincenzo towards Ponte di Ripa. Just ahead of the Start Line lay a patch of woodland about one thousand yards deep which then gave way to fields under standing corn. This close cover hid the German defences, and gave the advancing infantry only intermittent glances of each other. Quite often the supporting tanks could not find their infantrymen when these for one reason or another had gone temporarily to ground. There were several consequences. When something of the enemy's posts can be seen, junior leaders, upon whom success or failure mainly depend, can give their orders in relation to reference points which their men can see. They can then lead their little groups in moves which all can understand. A good view breeds confidence, determination and impetus. Matters are very different when little can be seen, and when the thump of mortar bombs, the stutter of machine guns, and the whip-crack of passing bullets are almost the only guides to the enemy's lairs. Lieutenant Tom, Corporal Dick, and Private Harry then must halt often, staring to front and flanks to spot the invisible, and thinking of what to do next. When men, sensibly, crouch or crawl, they disappear and control falters.[52] The battle becomes 'blind', confused, and slow. All this happened almost from the start on 23rd May. The approximate time-table was that the first objectives would be captured at 7.15 a.m. and that the second phase would begin at 8.15 a.m., but this rate of progress was not even approached. In the second phase the Loyal Edmonton Regiment on the right and the Seaforth on the left, both supported by tanks, were to capture the final objectives: Points 115 (right) and 107 (left) on the road which ran from Pontecorvo to Highway 6.

Very soon after P.P.C.L.I. and the Seaforth had crossed the Start Line the German guns and mortars brought down intense observed

Digitized by Google

fire, in which the machine guns joined when they could see targets, or on fixed lines when they could not.[53] Nevertheless the infantry and tanks pressed forward and in about an hour were reported to be near the German wire. But difficulties were appearing, mainly because so little could be seen and because communication was intermittent or lost. Colonel Ware of P.P.C.L.I., desperate for a view (and what battalion commander has not felt that ravaging anxiety?), took his headquarters right forward into the woodland and then lost contact by sight or signal with all his companies. Runners sent to find them did not return. The North Irish Horse too were in trouble. Owing to the dust kicked up by the barrage visibility sometimes lowered to thirty yards. Tank commanders (in other units too) stood up in open turrets to see, and some fell to snipers. Patches of anti-tank mines were found in the wire and in the woods, and flank moves to avoid them were defeated by deep wadis which branched from the Forme d'Aquino. A mine-lifting detachment from 3rd Canadian Field Company was wiped out and was replaced, but gapping and marking mine fields along the brigade's front was slow and costly as nearly always it is. Wireless between infantry and tanks often failed.

The Seaforth of Canada suffered under the same biting fire as the Patricias. The Battalion's report says baldly: 'By 0700 hrs the fog of war had really descended – W/T communication was intermittent with some companies and with one, D Coy, non-existent. Casualties were still streaming in, with tales of pls and coys decimated and all offrs dead or wounded. The enemy mortar and arty fire continued with undiminished fury . . . ' At about 8.40 a.m. Major Allan of 'B' Company reported that he had collected all the men of the rifle companies that he could find, about one hundred, and had consolidated on the first objective. The Seaforth had now to wait for the second phase to begin, and the wait turned out to be an ordeal. The North Irish Horse, in support, were hampered by mines and galled by anti-tank fire but stubbornly fought to help the infantry. Indeed by noon the regiment reported that eleven of its tanks had broken through the German defences and were close to the second objective. Anti-tank fire then forced these tanks to withdraw but only four reached P.P.C.L.I.'s positions. The rest were knocked out.

Coleman, commanding the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, received no reliable information of the battle's progress and therefore followed the time-table.[54] He led his battalion forward through a 'murderous fire of artillery, mortars, and machine guns' and across scattered 'S' mines. All communications within the battalion failed, but it reached P.P.C.L.I.'s positions about 9 a.m. Mines and anti-tank fire held up the accompanying squadron of 51st R.T.R. 2nd Infantry

Digitized by Google

Brigade's three battalions were all now engaged in a grim Blind Man's Buff. The programme had clearly broken down and no one knew when or how the second phase would begin.

In 3rd Infantry Brigade, the Carleton and York Regiment had enjoyed better luck. The battalion, unlike those in 2nd Infantry Brigade, had been free to patrol thoroughly at night and to study the ground by day, and had collected much valuable information about the German positions, the lines of approach, and the obstacles. Alterations in the divisional plan had been slow to reach 51st R.T.R. which therefore had not shared the Carleton and York's good fortune. To reach their forming-up place which they had not been able to reconnoitre, the tanks wandered in a circle for six hours during the night 22nd/23rd May because the infantryman who guided them lost his way.[55] It was 3 a.m. before tank commanders received their final orders. A troop commander later wrote 'As orders had been given entirely from one photograph we had to remember as best we could. When we were on the move [at 5 a.m.] my sergeant asked me on the B Set where we were going. Visibility was bad . . . '

At 6 a.m. the Carleton and York swept forward, 'leaning on the barrage', and although hammered by shells and mortar bombs, kept their impetus and cohesion and reached the first objective. 51st R.T.R. kept close to the infantry and halted with them, 'exchanging shot for shot with enemy a/tk guns and Mk IV tks.'* By way of change Captain Simcox, whose account we have quoted above, dismounted from his tank with a tommy gun, crawled to a German bunker and then killed three Germans and captured five. At about 10 a.m. the West Nova Scotia Regiment stood ready to pass through the Carleton and York but the second phase was postponed again and again, about twelve times up to 2 a.m. according to the commander of the Corps' artillery.

The reason for delay was as old as war itself. Vokes was getting very little information from his subordinate commanders because they were unable, in mist and dust and turmoil and intermittent failures in communications, to form any clear picture of the battle. Vokes was determined that 2nd and 3rd Infantry Brigades would begin the second phase together but he could not judge from the reports that reached him the time at which both could be ready. Then at about noon Gibson of 2nd Infantry Brigade reported that his situation was not firm enough for him to be able to mount Phase Two.[56] Vokes waited for an hour for things to improve and then decided that 3rd Infantry Brigade, alone, would attack the second objective, the road Pontecorvo–Highway 6. General Burns

* During this battle, as during many others, German assault guns and other SP types were often taken for tanks.

Digitized by Google

approved the new plan and Vokes then ordered Brigadier Bernatchez to mount the attack. He gave him back the Royal 22e Regiment from divisional reserve, and also the Three Rivers Regiment less one squadron because 51st R.T.R. was fast running out of fuel and ammunition.

Meanwhile at 1 p.m. 8th Army's artillery carried out a memorable shoot. During the morning Brigadier Ziegler, the Canadian Division's C.R.A., had received constant reports of the German's damaging enfilade fire from Aquino.[57] Fire brought down upon that place by 78th Division failed to divert the Germans' attention from the Canadians. At 12.27 p.m. Ziegler therefore asked permission to make Aquino a 'William' target, that is to bombard it with every gun of 8th Army which was in range and was not engaged upon a more important task. Permission was given, and so superbly skilled were the gunners that thirty-three minutes later 668 guns opened fire on Aquino. 3,509 shells, 92 tons in all, hit the target during a few minutes.* Unfortunately we know no German record of the results of this tremendous shoot. A few days later a British passer-by saw 'a small town in ruins, with the all pervading smell of death. It seemed worse here because the town . . . must have been pretty. There was a town square with a lawn and flagpole . . . all surroundings were derelict. Shop signs hanging on a single wall, Singer Sewing Machines, Shell Petrol, draped drunkenly over a heap of rubble.'[58]

At 4.10 p.m. 3rd Infantry Brigade, tanks, and artillery were ready to renew the main attack, and Vokes fixed the starting time as 4.50 p.m. Before the battle men propose, in battle events dispose: thus the planned hour's pause between the main phases extended to nine hours and thirty-five minutes. We must turn shortly to the action of Spry's 1st Infantry Brigade as described by the Canadian official historian:

> 'On the Division's left flank, the 1st Brigade had played an important, if less spectacular, part in the day's success. Continuing the uncompleted task of the previous day, the 48th Highlanders, supported by a fresh squadron . . . of 142nd Regiment [R.A.C.] struck out from its bridgehead and fought bitterly throughout

---

* The following units fired:

1 Light Battery	75-mm howitzers
19 Field Regiments	25-pdrs
9 Medium Regiments	4.5-inch and 5.5-inch guns
4 Batteries	7.2-inch howitzers
3 Batteries	155-mm guns
2 Battalions	155-mm howitzers
1 Battalion	8-inch howitzers

Digitized by Google

> the morning to reach Point 106 . . . At 2.00 p.m. when the remnants of a company of the Highlanders had gained the top of the hill and a second was pinned down on its slopes, Brigadier Spry ordered the Hastings to relieve the situation by attacking on the right. Lt.-Col. Cameron skilfully committed his companies in successive tasks . . . By five o'clock Point 106 was secure and the two battalions were busily engaged in mopping up the disorganized enemy. Early next morning the R.C.R. entered the ruins of Pontecorvo . . .'*

While Bernatchez was preparing his attack 2nd Infantry Brigade endured tribulation.[59] P.P.C.L.I. described its situation as critical; two rifle companies 'temporarily written off', many casualties in a third, and the fourth under heavy fire. The remnants of the Seaforth had consolidated by 4.45 p.m., when a counter-attack by tanks and artillery fell upon them. The tanks rattled down the road from Aquino, unscathed because no Canadian anti-tank guns had here been able to get forward, and, depressing their guns, poured fire into the Seaforth who were manning the roadside ditches. The Seaforth gave no ground; no men could have done more. The Edmontons likewise remained pinned down 'by the worst enemy fire the battalion has ever experienced.' But unknown to all these steadfast men, their Division was winning the battle. At 4.50 p.m. the West Nova Scotia Regiment and the tanks swept forward in a sudden rainstorm and close behind the shells of a heavy barrage.[60] Fifteen minutes or so later the Royal 22e followed. The Canadian troops were in no mood to be stopped and they were not stopped. A little after 6 p.m. the West Novas reported that they had taken their final objective, part of a tongue of high ground between the lateral roads. The Royal 22e Regiment had a longer fight. Following the West Novas for some distance, the battalion inclined northwards to widen the gap that was opening in the German line. The German resistance stiffened for a time and then gave way. By 9.15 p.m. the Royal 22e was consolidating about twelve hundred yards north of the West Nova Scotia Regiment on the same tongue of high ground.

1st Canadian Division had broken its sector of the Hitler Line in a battle which cost the Canadians 879 casualties, of which 543 were in 2nd Infantry Brigade, a number 'unequalled in a single day's fighting by any Canadian Brigade during the entire Italian campaign' as Colonel Nicholson remarks in his history. The North Irish Horse lost 25 tanks, 51st R.T.R. 7, and 142nd R.A.C. perhaps 12.[61] 585 German prisoners were counted in the Canadian Corps 'cage'

---

* Lieutenant-Colonel G. W. L. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy 1943–1945* (Ottawa 1956) p. 424.

Digitized by Google

up to noon on 24th May but we do not know how many Germans were killed and wounded in this battle.*[62]

The German records sketch the battle as seen by their higher commanders on 23rd May.[63] At first they paid some attention to Pontecorvo but not because of the Canadian Division's attack. They were watching the French Expeditionary Corps' thrusts towards S. Giovanni Incarico and Vallecorsa because these moves threatened to leave the Hitler Line, north of Pontecorvo, hanging in the air. The extreme western end of the Line also was in danger because 2nd U.S. Corps was on the point of capturing Terracina. 6th U.S. Corps' attack in the Anzio beachhead could not yet be appraised.

At about 9.30 a.m. Feuerstein reported to *AOK 10* that 576th Grenadier Regiment (Bode Battle Group), 2nd Battalion, 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment (Fabian Battle Group), and the Heilmann Battle Group were all being attacked by infantry and tanks and were holding their own. A weak attack had been made upon Piedimonte. Feuerstein however was worried about reinforcements. 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment now had so few men that he ordered 5th Mountain Division to send it two more companies of infantry. This was a family affair but when Westphal ordered the Mountain Division to send troops to 14th Panzer Corps as well, Feuerstein protested. He said that his shortage of reserves was now so great that he could no longer guarantee that 51st Mountain Corps would hold the right flank of its sector. He estimated that each of his divisions had lost about 1,500 men since 12th May. His protests had no effect and he and von Klinckowström, his Chief of Staff, decided that 51st Mountain Corps would be forced to retreat in a few hours time. von Klinckowström twice telephoned *AOK 10* for instructions for that contingency and Feuerstein sent a liaison officer with plans for withdrawal but *AOK 10* was silent.

As the day wore on the situation became worse. The penetration of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division's front was reported. This was true, but information that the enemy had advanced over four kilometres to Sterparelle was false. 1st Battalion 576th Grenadier Regiment, 2nd Battalion 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and most of the Straffner Battle Group were said to be destroyed. The two companies of 5th Mountain Division and nameless detachments of parchutists were rushed up to counter-attack 3rd Infantry Brigade, and were slaughtered by the Canadian artillery. At length Feuerstein took his decision. At midnight 23rd/24th May he ordered

* The figure for 142nd R.A.C.'s casualties in tanks has been estimated from 8th Army's A.F.V. State which is not always accurate.

Digitized by Google

90th Panzer Grenadier Division to withdraw to the line S. Giovanni–Ponteregno, and its artillery to retire across the river Melfa.[64] Since Ponteregno was situated about three kilometres north of Pontecorvo on the road leading to Highway 6, Feuerstein could not have known that the Canadians had already nearly reached that place. Also unknown to Feuerstein, Kesselring had sanctioned the withdrawal at 11 p.m. 'though naturally with great regret'. On the morning of 24th May Feuerstein reported that 90th Panzer Grenadier Division had withdrawn successfully, but that its troops had been strained to breaking-point by the air and artillery bombardments which they had endured since 12th May. He believed that his new position was completely makeshift. He was right.

(v)

Burns had planned that when 1st Canadian Division had breached the Hitler Line, 5th Canadian Armoured Division (Major-General B. M. Hoffmeister) would exploit by crossing the River Melfa, five miles away, and then by pushing on a further five miles to Ceprano, a small town situated where Highway 6 crosses the Liri (which there runs north to south) and leads on westwards through the valley of the River Sacco.*[65] Hoffmeister in turn decided that 5th Armoured Brigade would capture crossings over the Melfa, and that 11th Infantry Brigade would then pass through and exploit to Ceprano. 5th Canadian Armoured Division's two field regiments of artillery were augmented by 11th Canadian Army Field Regiment, and Canadian Corps Headquarters arranged powerful additional artillery support. In all Hoffmeister had at his disposal 236 guns, including 32 medium and 20 heavy. On 23rd May the Armoured Division was concentrated close behind the left flank of 1st Canadian Division, awaiting orders to advance. These depended upon the infantry division's progress, and during 23rd May there were three irritating changes of routes and timings; during the night 23rd/24th May several heavy showers of rain made the track which the

---

* *5th Canadian Armoured Division* Main formations and units:
5th Armoured Brigade (Brigadier J. D. B. Smith):
2nd Armoured Regiment (Lord Strathcona's Horse) (Royal Canadians),
5th Armoured Regiment (8th Princess Louise's (New Brunswick) Hussars),
9th Armoured Regiment (The British Columbia Dragoons).
11th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier T. E. D'O. Snow):
The Perth Regiment, The Cape Breton Highlanders, The Irish Regiment of Canada,
11th Independent Machine Gun Company (The Princess Louise Fusiliers).
C.A.C. 3rd Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment (The Governor General's Horse Guards).
R.C.A. 8th and 17th Field Regiments; 4th A/Tk Regiment; 5th Light A.A. Regiment.
R.C.E. 1st and 10th Field Squadrons; 4th Field Park Squadron.
Motor Battalion The Westminster Regiment.

Digitized by Google

Armoured Division would follow greasy and difficult. Nevertheless the leading troops of 5th Armoured Brigade crossed the Start Line at 7.57 a.m. on 24th May. This was the Canadian Armoured Division's first operation as a division although a number of its units had tasted battle when detached on various occasions.

Brigadier Smith had foreseen that he would have to advance in the shifting and confusing circumstances that must occur at the end of the Canadian Infantry Division's battle, and that either or both of his flanks would be exposed. He therefore decided to make two bounds rather than dash forward headlong. The first bound would be to somewhere near Mancini where he would make a firm base, and the second to the west bank of the Melfa where he would seize a bridgehead. His brigade of three armoured regiments had been reinforced with infantry: the Irish Regiment of Canada from 11th Infantry Brigade, mounted in carriers, and the Westminster Regiment, the Armoured Division's mobile Motor Battalion. He organized his brigade in two Battle Groups and a reserve, thus:

(a) *Vokes Force* (Lieutenant-Colonel F.A. Vokes, British Columbia Dragoons):
British Columbia Dragoons (9th Armoured Regiment)
Irish Regiment of Canada
One battery (SP) 4th A/Tk Regiment.
Task: to make a firm base near Mancini.

(b) *Griffin Force* (Lieutenant-Colonel P.G. Griffin, Lord Strathcona's Horse):
Lord Strathcona's Horse (2nd Armoured Regiment)
'A' Company, Westminster Regiment
One battery (SP) 8th Field Regiment
One battery (SP) 4th A/Tk Regiment.
Task: to cross the river Melfa about one mile downstream from the point where the railway line crosses the river, and to establish a small bridgehead.

(c) *Reserve.* Remainder of the 5th Armoured Brigade, including 8th New Brunswick Hussars (5th Armoured Regiment), 11th Infantry Brigade (less the Irish Regiment of Canada), Westminster Regiment (less 'A' Company).

The flanks, particularly the right flank, were to be protected by 3rd Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment. The artillery fire-plan was to consist of heavy concentrations, on call from advancing units, upon points chosen from the map and air photographs, and from the reports of F.O.O.s. The ever-increasing range would make it necessary to move forward some guns while the advance went on, and arrangements were made to send 17th Field Regiment and 11th Canadian Army Field Regiment forward to Mancini when required.

Digitized by Google

A troublesome factor in the Canadian plans was ignorance of the exact nature of the 'going' between the Hitler Line and the Melfa. Indeed lack of detailed topographical information afflicted every headquarters in 8th Army. In the Canadian instance the simple reason was that close ground reconnaissance beyond the Hitler Line was almost impossible while the Germans held it.* The only sources of information were air photographs, maps, and Intelligence reports written from guidebooks and other handbooks. The Liri valley passed for open, rolling land for plough or pasture or vineyard, well wooded with olive, fruit, and shade trees. In reality the 'going' was much worse than the descriptions suggested. The undulations of the valley were often formed by small, razor-backed ridges; clumps of trees were everywhere and their full foliage blocked the view; some fields were terraced; the ground was criss-crossed by irrigation ditches and littered with tree-stumps and fallen trees, while here and there gaped deep wadis masked by undergrowth.

Vokes Force set off and was soon heavily shelled from the front and from the right flank. At Ponteregno it overran a detachment of 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment and some anti-tank guns which were holding this place on the left flank of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division. This action destroyed Baade's chance of holding the line S. Giovanni–Ponteregno as Feuerstein had ordered on the night of 23rd/24th May. Next Vokes Force had a sharp brush with Panther tanks of 1st Battalion, 4th Panzer Regiment and a detachment probably of 3rd Parachute Regiment. The Canadians lost three Shermans, but destroyed three Panthers and some anti-tank guns, besides taking 90 prisoners. At about 12.30 noon Vokes Force reached Mancini. It had covered three and a half miles in a little over four hours.

Brigadier Smith did not wait to hear that Vokes Force had reached Mancini before giving Griffin Force its marching orders. And so Griffin set out at 11.30 a.m.[66] He passed Mancini at 1.30 p.m. and headed west for the Melfa. The Reconnaissance Troop of Lord Strathcona's Horse led in light Stuart tanks, followed by 'A' Squadron in Shermans and 'A' Company of the Westminsters, and then by the Strathcona's 'B' and 'C' Squadrons like the barbs on an arrow head, 'B' on the right, 'C' on the left.

Shortly before 3 p.m. the Reconnaissance Troop reached the Melfa a mile downstream from the railway crossing. The river here

* When there is plenty of time in hand an intelligent and adventurous pair of men can usually find their way through an enemy position at night, hide and observe by day, and return by night, even by slouching up a road as if they were enemy soldiers straggling from a fatigue party.

Digitized by Google

was about fifty yards wide, with little water flowing. Its banks however were nasty obstacles, twenty feet deep, and covered with a thick growth of saplings and scrub. In spite of pick and shovel work only three Stuarts reached the west bank to form the first bridgehead. The German troops holding the west bank were 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (90th Panzer Grenadier Division), now about three hundred strong, and 1st Battalion, 100th Mountain Regiment (5th Mountain Division), and part of a company of Panthers from 1st Battalion, 4th Panzer Regiment.[67]

While the Strathcona's Reconnaissance Troop was crossing the river a number of Panthers and self-propelled guns, advancing from the south up the east bank, attacked the regiment's 'A' and 'C' squadrons.[68] Clumps of trees in leaf, hedges, and clouds of dust, so obscured the view that the action quickly became a series of duels between tank and tank or tank and gun. By 4.30 p.m. the German force withdrew south and then across the river, leaving on the field four tanks and eight anti-tank guns. Seventeen Canadian Shermans had been knocked out. Meanwhile 'A' Company of the Westminsters, under Major J. K. Mahony, drove through the armoured battle and crossed the Melfa on foot and under heavy fire to join the Reconnaissance Troop's three Stuarts. A good deal of fire was being exchanged between the Germans on the west bank and the Canadians and at about 6 p.m. four German tanks and about fifty infantry attacked Mahony's company. The Westminsters had no anti-tank guns as yet but cocked up their PIATS to gain range and lobbed anti-tank bombs at the tanks, while pouring small-arms fire at the infantry. At two hundred yards distance the German tanks sheered off; the infantry had already gone to ground. Within an hour however four German tanks attacked from the north, coming down the river bed. These overran a Canadian section, and then stopped, apparently to reconnoitre, because one opened its turret, into which Private Culling at once threw a Mills grenade, and then shot the crew as they baled out and ran. The other tanks turned tail. 'A' Company however was in danger until at about 8.30 p.m. 'B' Company crossed the river and took position on Mahony's right, and until 'C' Company later joined him. At midnight 24th/25th May the long-awaited anti-tank guns arrived. The Westminsters however had to endure continual artillery and mortar fire. Mahony was wounded twice but remained at his post; for his valour on this day and the next he was awarded the V.C.

The Canadians had made a shallow bridgehead and Brigadier Smith decided to enlarge it on the 25th by attacking with the Westminsters and the Irish Regiment of Canada. A little before noon on the 25th both these battalions advanced and very soon gained their objective, a lateral road one thousand yards west of

Digitized by Google

the river. Passing through them, the Cape Breton Highlanders, the 8th Princess Louise's (New Brunswick) Hussars, and the Perth Regiment advanced another thousand yards. The armoured brigade's advance had been matched meanwhile by a composite force, Adams Force, from the Canadian Infantry Division which Vokes sent out early on 24th May to exploit from Pontecorvo as far as the meeting of the Liri and Melfa.*[69] During the 24th May Adams Force fought a number of small actions with German rear parties until at nightfall it halted two miles east of the Melfa. At daybreak on the 25th the force marched and soon reached the river, to discover that its bed was five hundred yards wide, and that the west bank was a line of cliffs forty feet high. That bank was held by small parties of German infantry which belonged to 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment. The Carleton and York Regiment found a ford but the Germans disputed the crossing until dusk and then slipped away. The Canadian divisions now held the west bank of the Melfa on a front of six thousand yards and were ready to exploit.

On 23rd May the Germans in Aquino showed no sign of withdrawing and Kirkman (13th Corps) decided that it would be quicker to bypass the town than to take it.[70] He ordered 6th Armoured Division to pass south of Aquino on 24th May by a track which the Canadians had improved, and then to turn northwards to Castrocielo and Roccasecca. However on 24th May the Canadian track was crowded with the tail of 5th Canadian Armoured Division until 9 p.m. and 6th Armoured Division's advance consequently had to be postponed until 25th May. This was another foretaste of future traffic jams and their effects. North of Highway 6 Polish troops, helped by 21st Indian Infantry Brigade, were pushing the Germans out of Piedimonte as a prelude to an advance by 8th Indian Division on the right of 6th Armoured Division.

On the German side 51st Mountain Corps' delaying positions between S. Giovanni and Ponteregno collapsed on 24th May.[71] Feuerstein had no confidence in the Melfa position because he thought that the river was a poor obstacle and knew that the defences on the west bank were sketchy. He gave this opinion to von Vietinghoff. von Vietinghoff however was trying to refashion

---

* *Adams Force* (Lieutenant-Colonel F. D. Adams, 4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards, 4th Reconnaissance Regiment):

4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards.
Two squadrons The Royal Canadian Dragoons (1st Armoured Car Regiment).
One squadron Three Rivers Regiment (Sherman tanks).
The Carleton and York Regiment.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

AOK 10's defensive front and issued Army Order No. 11. This directed 14th Panzer Corps to occupy the line Ponte della Mola (on the Sacco due south of Pofi)–S. Giovanni Incarico, and 51st Mountain Corps to hold the line of the Melfa from the Liri northwards to Roccasecca and thence eastwards to Terelle.* The order included the caution that events on *AOK 14's* front (which we describe in the next chapter) might force *AOK 10* into further withdrawals. In the afternoon of 24th May von Vietinghoff told Feuerstein that 51st Mountain Corps must hold the line of the Melfa for several days. Feuerstein, when he had digested this message, replied that the Canadians had crossed the river, and that he could not repel them with the troops which remained to him. Nevertheless he kept up appearances by passing on von Vietinghoff's message to his subordinates, but a little later quietly informed them of the next positions to which they would withdraw. At about 4 p.m. on 24th May he ordered Heidrich to bring back 1st Parachute Division from Aquino and Piedimonte to the Melfa. Heidrich then withdrew without difficulty, steering well clear of the Canadian Corps' north flank, and untroubled by 13th Corps which was standing fast until the 25th. If Heidrich was lucky, Baade's force was near the end of its tether. At 5.15 p.m. he reported that seven of his battalions had been wiped out, and that his guns could no longer effectively engage the Allies' vastly superior artillery. The report about the artillery is interesting in view of the numerous reports from Canadian and British observers that the German guns often fell silent when the small British artillery observation aircraft took to the air.†

On 25th May the Canadian Corps completed its bridgeheads across the Melfa, and was ready to continue its advance. In 13th Corps the leading troops of 6th Armoured Division reached the Melfa, those of 78th Division reached Roccasecca railway station, and on the right flank those of 8th Indian Division entered Castrocielo. On the left of 8th Army and across the Liri the French Expeditionary Corps was advancing towards S. Giovanni Incarico, Castro dei Volsci, and Amaseno (*see Map 2*). These developments forced the hands of von Vietinghoff and Feuerstein, and Baade was ordered to withdraw to Ceprano during the night 25th/26th May, while

---

* *See Map 16.* Terelle is shown just north of Mt Cairo on the inset.

† The wiped-out battalions and their parent divisions were:
Replacement Battalion (44th Infantry Division)
1st Battalion, 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (90th Panzer Grenadier Division)
2nd Battalion, 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment (90th Panzer Grenadier Division)
2nd Battalion, 576th Grenadier Regiment (305th Infantry Division)
305th Engineer Battalion (305th Infantry Division)
2nd Battalion, 85th Mountain Regiment (5th Mountain Division)
Composite Mountain Battalion (5th Mountain Division)
Seven battalions from four different divisions are an indication of the Germans' difficulties in finding immediate reinforcements.

Digitized by Google

Heidrich was ordered to withdraw 1st Parachute Division to a line between a point near Colle Donate (Pt 203) and S. Padre near Inero (*see Map 11*) where he was to make touch with 44th Infantry Division. These two depleted divisions therefore were to hold a front of fourteen thousand yards in hilly country, a task which was scarcely practicable. Kesselring too was forced to modify his policy of no withdrawal.[72] He discussed *AOK 10's* situation with von Vietinghoff shortly after 5 p.m. and they agreed that unless 14th Panzer Corps and 51st Mountain Corps could form a firm, connected front it was likely that the Allies would drive a wedge between them. von Vietinghoff was authorised to issue orders (at 1.15 a.m. on 26th May) that both Corps would withdraw at once to the line Castro dei Volsci–Mt S. Cataldo (Pt 373)–Ceprano–Arce–Casalvieri–Scontrone. One consequence of these orders was that Feuerstein withdrew the two divisions, 5th Mountain and 114th Jäger, on his extreme left flank. These divisions had not as yet been seriously engaged by the British 10th Corps.

So much, for the moment, for *AOK 10*. In the next chapter we must look at Anzio where *AOK 14* and 6th U.S. Corps were in their third day of battle.

(vi)

See Maps 3 *and* 11

In this section we take up the story of the operations of Mediterranean Allied Air Forces from dawn 19th May to dawn 5th June, except for their operations against ports and shipping.[73] The story therefore extends to the end of the battle of Rome, although the last phase of the battle, from the point of view of the land forces is not described until Chapter V. It is indeed rather artificial to place, and complete, the story of air operations at mid-point of the battle, but this arrangement does more justice to the importance of the air operations than would be done by making them a postscript to the account of the battle on land.

Tactical operations took pride of place in the activities of M.A.A.F. which accompanied the intense battle on land and they were one of the most powerful causes of that battle's successful course. The Allied air forces dominated the German Air Force and gave the land forces protection from air attack which was as good as complete. Equally important was the ever-growing and calamitous damage which the Allied air forces inflicted upon German road and rail communications. The damage was done by continual well planned and well executed air attacks within the area of battle and beyond it, which were a kind of culmination of the 'Strangle' operation (19th March to 11th May) in which M.A.A.F. had exerted almost

Digitized by Google

its whole strength in an attempt to destroy the German L. of C.*

Between dawn 19th May and dawn 5th June, within the area of battle, M.A.A.F.'s bombers of all types flew 9,226 sorties and dropped 5,673 tons of bombs. To make a useful, although greatly simplified, picture of this activity we can average that about 542 sorties were flown and 334 tons of bombs were dropped during each 24-hour period.†

After *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* had been forced out of the Hitler Line and the Anzio beachhead both Armies had to retreat northwards. Therefore the lie of the roads behind these armies was very important because to a large extent it governed the pattern of their withdrawals and consequently the pattern of M.A.A.F.'s attacks upon roads and the traffic on them.

In the face of 5th Army's advance *AOK 14*, which was in considerable disarray by the beginning of June, fell back across the Tiber in order to rally its battered forces north of the river. It passed east and west of Rome as well as through it, but most of its movements lay east of the capital because the thirteen-mile gap between the west side of the city and the sea was too narrow to hold much traffic, and contained only two militarily useful bridges over the Tiber. By 2nd June rearguards of *AOK 10* were still fighting in the Alban Hills, but the bulk of this Army was withdrawing to positions on or near the important lateral road Rome–Avezzano–Popoli–Pescara (Highway 5), namely Tivoli, Tagliacozzo, Avezzano.

The roads which ran north-west to Rome and northerly towards Highway 5 were exceedingly important for German purposes. These were the great Highway 7 (Via Appia) and Highway 6 (Via Casalina), and between them the lesser roads which ran through the Alban Hills, and others more or less parallel to Highway 7 on its southern side. North of Highway 6 the most important hill roads leading towards Route 5 were:

Valmontone–Palestrina–via Gallicano *or* Genazzano and Ciciliano–Tivoli
Frosinone–Alatri–Subiaco–Arsoli
Sora–Avezzano (Highway 82)
Opi–Collarmele (Highway 83)

Although often tortuous and narrow, they were inter-connected by a

* We must now define again 'the area of battle' from the point of view of the Allied air forces. On 19th May this area lay between the fronts of 5th and 8th Armies and a line, west to east, Fiumicino–Rome–Palestrina–Sora–Popoli–Citta S. Angelo on the east coast. As the Allied armies advanced this second line also moved northwards, conforming to the German retreat, until by dawn on 5th June it ran, west to east, Cerveteri–northern edge of Lake Bracciano–Civita Castellana–Carsoli–Citta S. Angelo; the line and place names are shown on *Map 3 and Inset 11*.

† The approximate number of sorties flown against targets in Italy, other than ports, between dawn 19th May and dawn 5th June, and the bombloads which were dropped is given in a table at the end of this chapter.

Digitized by Google

number of minor roads along which traffic could be diverted. To picture the area south of Rome, through which *AOK 10* was to withdraw, we can imagine a triangle pointing southwards. Its base is the lateral Highway 5: Rome–Tivoli–Avezzano; the apex is at Frosinone; one side is formed by Highway 6: Rome–Frosinone; the other side is the road Avezzano–Sora–Frosinone.

The air attacks which we are considering were against vehicles of every description, marching men, and vulnerable points on the road. Vulnerable points were various; for example, towns and villages where the debris of shattered buildings would block narrow streets or make bottlenecks; bridges and culverts; and places where revetments protected roads from landslips. A rough analysis of the attacks during the period dawn 19th May to dawn 5th June reveals an interesting pattern. If we exclude targets which we cannot pinpoint and vaguely defined areas, we find that 78 places, mostly towns and villages, were attacked. The favourite targets can be shown by counting the number of days out of seventeen on which they were attacked, and the number of attacks which were made during that number of days. A target could of course be attacked several times on one day. Thus the table below shows that Subiaco was attacked 14 times in 9 days, Avezzano 12 times in 8 days and so on.*

TABLE

Within the *AOK 10* withdrawal triangle			Elsewhere in the battle area			North of the battle area		
Place	Days	Attacks	Place	Days	Attacks	Place	Days	Attacks
Subiaco	9	14	Frascati	5	8	Montalto di Castro	8	9
Avezzano	8	12	Ariccia	3	7	Civita Castellana	6	6
Valmontone	8	17	Popoli	7	8	Viterbo	4	4
Tivoli	6	7	Terracina	3	3	Manciano	3	3
Ferentino	6	9	Genzano	3	3			
Frosinone	5	10	Fara in Sabina	3	3			
Carsoli	4	4						
Sora	4	4	Of other places attacked, 7 were visited on 2 days and 18 on one day.			Of other places attacked, 2 were visited on 2 days and 12 on one day.		
Alatri	3	4						
Arsoli	3	3						
Cave	3	3						
Palestrina	3	3						
Of other places attacked, 3 were visited on 2 days and 14 on one day.								

* During the period 12th May to dawn 5th June 70 L. of C. targets were attacked within the area of battle. These targets were such things as dumps of ammunition, supplies, petrol, etc. In calculating the number of 70 we have excluded targets which we cannot identify.

Digitized by Google

As will be seen, the favourite hunting ground for the Allied bombers and fighter-bombers was the *AOK 10* withdrawal triangle mentioned above. Targets were found by the work of Intelligence staffs, by observation from the ground and by air reconnaissance. Fighter-bombers directed by Rover David were highly successful against fleeting targets, in large measure due to a novel system of initiating quick attacks. All suitable fleeting targets spotted by pilots of tactical reconnaissance aircraft were reported by radio to the air controller at Rover David who in each case took one of three possible courses of action.[74] If a fighter-bomber formation was airborne the Tac. R. pilot would be instructed to make rendezvous with the fighter-bombers and lead them to the target. Alternatively, if no fighter-bombers were airborne, the Tac. R. pilot would be told to keep the target in view until fighter-bombers on call at base could take off and arrive in the forward area. He would then rendezvous with them and carry on as before. If however the Tac. R. aircraft was running short of fuel, the pilot would be ordered to fly to the on call fighter-bombers' base, refuel, take off with them, and lead them directly to the target. Only the sufficiency of Tac. R. aircraft at the time made this diversion from their normal duties for a novel purpose possible. The success of air attacks upon motor transport was great. The air forces claimed to have destroyed 4,090 vehicles and to have damaged 3,979 during the period 12th May to 6th June.[75] Whenever it was possible to check a sample of the claims by a later count of wrecks on the ground the claims were proved to be accurate. The targets of tactical air operations changed as might be necessary. During the first few days of the battle the main targets were artillery positions, headquarters, and bodies of troops. From about 15th May the principal targets became the German administrative traffic, for example supplies and reinforcements, and the vehicles, roads, and railways which carried it. On 23rd May the weight of the attack, for a few days, fell upon the artillery and troops which opposed 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio and those which faced 8th Army as it attacked the Hitler Line. Thereafter attacks were directed against the troops who were opposing 5th Army's thrusts towards Valmontone and Rome, and against the formations which were withdrawing towards the line of Highway 5 Rome–Tivoli–Avezzano.

An account of air operations which cannot relate the adventures of individual aircraft resembles, unhappily, a catalogue. Therefore in describing tactical air operations in the period which we are reviewing it seems best to choose some days, as examples of all, on which German complaints of air attack were markedly loud.

On 20th and 21st May the Germans remarked that Allied air attacks had destroyed all the bridges over the Liri which had

Digitized by Google

therefore become a difficult obstacle to movements between 14th Panzer Corps' and 51st Mountain Corps' sectors.[76] On 21st and 22nd May the two Panzer Grenadier Regiments of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division moving from north of Rome towards Terracina, arrived on the battlefield in driblets because of constant halts imposed by air attacks, which also obstructed the roads. On 22nd May von Vietinghoff spoke of the almost insuperable burden laid upon his administrative staffs by their struggle to bring forward supplies and reinforcements on shattered roads. There were particularly bad bottlenecks at Avezzano and Frosinone, and it was almost impossible for motor transport to use Highway 6 in daylight. On the 23rd fighter-bombers strafed troops in the Anzio sector all day long and, with the American artillery, inflicted terrible casualties upon 362nd and 715th Infantry Divisions. On 24th May the roads leading to Avezzano and Arsoli and Subiaco were so damaged that traffic was constantly disrupted, and the Chief Engineer of *AOK 10* had the greatest difficulties with repairs. How were the air forces achieving all this? In answering this question we can mention only the larger attacks, and pass over many small ones, and almost all strafing.

On 21st May Allied air activity within the battle area was about two and a half times as great as on the 20th, in spite of broken low and medium clouds which hindered the medium day bombers; about 459 sorties were flown in daylight, and during the night 21st/22nd the Bostons and Baltimores of the Desert Air Force attacked motor transport north and south-east of Rome.

On 22nd May 155 Fortresses dropped 205 tons of bombs on Avezzano and closed Route 5 to traffic. Spitfire fighter-bombers attacked the same road at Capelle and Tagliacozzo. Liberators from M.A.S.A.F. dropped 76 tons of bombs on Valmontone and American Mitchells attacked nearby Cave and, 30 miles south-east of it, Ferentino.[77] American Kittyhawk fighter-bombers bombed Colleferro and Alatri. Mustangs and Thunderbolts also were constantly over the battlefield and Sezze and Ceccano were among their targets. During the night 22nd/23rd May R.A.F. Wellingtons and Liberators attacked Highway 6 at Valmontone. Ferentino and Frosinone suffered from other Wellingtons and M.A.S.A.F.'s bombers dropped 120 tons of bombs in all. R.A.F. Bostons attacked Cisterna and Tivoli and the Baltimores visited Subiaco, Carsoli, and Avezzano.

On 23rd May 600 and more bomber sorties were flown within the area of battle although heavy cloud forced the Mitchells to stand down, and spoiled the Marauders' sorties.[78] Much help was given to 6th U.S. Corps. 168 American Liberators from M.A.S.A.F. dropped 364 tons of bombs on German troops in the Alban Hills

Digitized by Google

at Grottaferrata, Marino, Nemi and Valmontone. 59 Bostons from U.S. XII T.A.C. bombed positions between Campoleone and Cisterna, and 193 Kittyhawk and Thunderbolt fighter-bombers attacked the towns of Norma, Littoria, and Terracina on the southern side of the Anzio beachhead. American Mustangs and Kittyhawks attacked various targets in the Sacco and Liri valleys south-eastward of Castro dei Volsci, and R.A.F. Kittyhawk fighter-bombers attacked guns north-west of Pontecorvo. 67 Fortresses and Liberators bombed troops at Avezzano and 83 Liberators bombed the road at Subiaco. During the night 23rd/24th R.A.F. Liberators and Wellingtons from M.A.S.A.F. attacked Highway 6 between Valmontone and Ferentino as did Bostons from the Desert Air Force.

On 24th May M.A.T.A.F. flew nearly 2,000 sorties during daylight, the greatest number which it had achieved so far. The air forces' attacks were widely spread.[79] A large force of Thunderbolts bombed roads and motor transport north of Rome. In the Anzio sector 119 American Kittyhawk fighter-bombers attacked artillery near Littoria, and 61 Kittyhawks and 35 Thunderbolts attacked the towns of Lanuvio and Cori. In the direction of Highway 6 Marauders bombed roads in the neighbourhood of Zagarolo and Gallicano, while further south-eastward fighter-bombers and strafing fighters found excellent targets between Valmontone and Ferentino, and claimed to have destroyed and damaged 563 vehicles. Marauders bombed roads near Subiaco. Near Isoletta, at the meeting of the Liri and Sacco valleys, 102 R.A.F. Kittyhawks bombed roads and bridges while others attacked guns and vehicles near Arce. During the night 24th/25th Liberators and Wellingtons bombed Valmontone, and R.A.F. Bostons and Baltimores bombed roads near Subiaco.

We have now given some typical examples of attacks on the German Army on the ground, and on 25th May it is the turn of the German Air Force.[80] On this day Allied fighters encountered about one hundred F.W. 190s and Me. 109s near the German advanced landing grounds at Canino and Viterbo. The Allied fighters destroyed 6 F.W. 190s and 10 Me. 109s in combat in the air, and 9 F.W. 190s on the ground, besides 7 Me. 109s which never returned to base. The loss of 32 fighters in one day was a heavy blow for the depleted German air force.

If we now jump ahead to the days 28th and 30th May we find the German troops as much afflicted by air attacks as before, although on the 29th Kesselring, in a report to Hitler, praised them for their courage and steadfastness in the face of the Allies' dominant air forces.[81] On 28th May *AOK 10's* War Diary recorded that although every military policeman in the army and a number of regimental

Digitized by Google

commanders were engaged in traffic control, yet the ceaseless attacks on roads and vehicles were causing delays of unpredictable length in the movement of troops and supplies. Near Frosinone roads were almost entirely blocked and vehicles could travel at no more than five kilometres an hour if they could move at all. On 30th May the attacks on the road Subiaco–Alatri were described as punitive and it was blocked for 48 hours. On 29th May Kesselring reported great delays in moving troops into Italy or within it owing to nightly 'road hunts' by the Allied forces.

On 26th and 27th May the Allied air forces had been especially active and the attacks on motor transport were showing diminishing returns.[82] Yet on the 28th 102 vehicles were destroyed near Subiaco, and 235 were destroyed or damaged elsewhere. On the 28th only the fighter-bombers operated within the area of battle. 87 American Kittyhawk, Mustang, and Thunderbolt fighter-bombers bombed Tivoli and roads east and south of Rome while 85 American Kittyhawks and 115 R.A.F. Kittyhawks and Mustangs flew armed reconnaissance over a wide area, attacking towns, roads and bridges. 59 Spitfire fighter-bombers from the Desert Air Force attacked the railway between Aquila and Sulmona, and the road Avezzano–Popoli–Sulmona and other roads in these areas. 130 American Kittyhawk, Mustang and Thunderbolt fighter-bombers reached out north of Rome and destroyed a bridge near Montalto di Castro and badly damaged one near Manciano. Bostons bombed an ammunition dump at Bassano. During the night 28th/29th Desert Air Force Bostons attacked motor transport north of Rome, and its Baltimores did likewise at Sulmona, Popoli, and Pescara.

On 29th May attacks on motor transport increased.[83] 126 American Kittyhawk and Mustang fighter-bombers covered the area Frosinone–Alatri–Sora, and 150 of the same aircraft of the R.A.F. joined in and extended the attacks to Ferentino and northwards to Avezzano. Some 108 vehicles were destroyed and 81 were damaged. North of Rome Thunderbolts finished off the bridge at Manciano. During the night 29th/30th some Desert Air Force Bostons attacked transport north of Rome while Bostons and Baltimores attacked roads near Viterbo. We should mention before passing on that on 28th and 29th May a large number of sorties were flown against the railways in central Italy.

On 30th May American fighter-bombers flew 213 sorties against roads at Ferentino and Alatri and bombed the towns of Veroli and Alatri. Some of these fighter-bombers attacked targets on roads near Rome, for example Ariccia on Highway 1, between Lake Albano and Lake Nemi, and elsewhere in the area of battle. Twenty-three R.A.F. Spitfires attacked motor vehicles near Avezzano, and 172 R.A.F. Kittyhawks and Mustangs attacked the like targets near

Digitized by Google

Subiaco. Near Subiaco, too, No. 3 Squadron R.A.A.F. found some 200 vehicles and brought them to a halt with a salvo of bombs dropped ahead of the column, another in the middle of it, and a third behind it. The remaining squadrons of No. 239 Wing R.A.F. then attacked the unlucky convoy. About 120 of its vehicles were destroyed or damaged. 30th May was a bad day for German transport because during it the air forces claimed that they had destroyed or damaged 304 vehicles. Even if one arbitrarily disallows one claim in three as being mistaken, the remainder is a crippling rate of loss.

On 30th May, too, the medium day bombers joined in the work of destruction. 24 Mitchells dropped 41 tons of bombs on a road bridge at Arsoli, and 120 Marauders dropped 214 tons of bombs on road bridges north of Rome, for example at Borghetto (south-west of Magliano Sabino) on Highway 3. 70 Thunderbolt fighter-bombers dropped 44 tons of bombs on the road bridge at Montalto di Castro on Highway 1. German records say that the bridge at Borghetto was badly damaged and that two bridges near Rome—at Castel Giubbileo (four miles north on Highway 4) and at Monterotondo—were destroyed. During the night 30th/31st May 41 Wellingtons from M.A.S.A.F. dropped 72 tons of bombs on roads near Subiaco, and 28 Baltimores from the Desert Air Force attacked bridges at Avezzano and at Pescara on the Adriatic shore, and transport near Popoli. 16 Bostons from the Desert Air Force bombed Frascati and roads south of Rome.

The paragraph above is merely a sample of a sample because it does not describe all the tactical operations of the Allied air forces on 30th May and during the night 30th/31st. The period chosen is not a red letter day in the air force's life, but is one of normal activity. One must keep in mind also the fact that the air forces, besides attacking roads and transport, were directly supporting the Allied divisions in battle by attacking artillery, defensive positions, German troops and so forth. It is no wonder that the Germans complained constantly and resentfully of the tribulation which visited them from the air. One must remember too that the effects of air action are cumulative. The heaps of debris grew higher, more carcasses of vehicles lay on the verges of the roads, the morale of troops, whom ubiquitous aircraft harried from pillar to post with bombs, cannonades, and bursts from multiple machine guns, weakened and sank. On the other hand the Allied troops often saw their air forces at work, and when one has suffered the attack of the *Luftwaffe* in its prime, it is pleasant to sit behind a boulder and watch the Allied bombers fly steadily in, and to see the parti-coloured clouds of smoke and dust leap up as the bombs burst among the enemy.

Digitized by Google

On 1st June a small airborne operation was launched to prevent the retreating Germans from destroying bridges on the road Sora–Avezzano and also to cause havoc in rear of 51st Mountain Corps.[84] Sixty-one parachutists from the 6th Parachute Battalion were dropped in desolate country at Toricelle, south of the Conca del Fucino. Eleven Dakotas of U.S. 62nd Troop Carrier Group carried them and the escort of Spitfires came from 244 Wing R.A.F. The drop was completed at 10.20 p.m. and there was just one casualty. Next day supplies for the parachute troops were dropped but on 3rd June the pilots of aircraft which carried more supplies saw no ground signals and it was correctly assumed that the raiding party had been scattered or had been captured (see Chapter V, p. 255). The bridges were destroyed by the Germans after all.

During the period from dawn 19th May until dawn 5th June M.A.A.F. persistently attacked the railways in northern Italy and in central Italy north of the area of battle.[85] Bombers of all types flew a total of 5,066 sorties and dropped 6,609 tons of bombs, figures which give us the yardstick, artificial but useful, of 298 sorties flown and 388 tons of bombs dropped during every 24 hours. M.A.T.A.F. played the greatest part in these operations. It flew 4,106 sorties and dropped 4,676 tons of bombs and of these sorties the medium day bombers flew 2,011 and the fighter-bombers 1,862. M.A.S.A.F.'s share of the total effort was 919 sorties and 1,924 tons of bombs, and M.A.C.A.F. contributed a modest 41 sorties and 9 tons of bombs. The fighter-bomber has a very good claim to be called the maid of all work in this offensive just as it had in the offensive against motor transport and roads.

The types of railway target which were attacked were for the most part bridges, sections of track which passed through difficult country, and stations. It is clearly not possible to give the details of the hundreds of attacks, but it is possible to illustrate the problem which faced the Germans daily, and then to summarize the effects of the attacks on the principal railway routes in central Italy. By the middle of May the number of daily cuts in the railway lines averaged 75, and on 30th May the movements staff of *AOK 10* reported 103 cases of damage which awaited repair.[86] In terms of lines blocked during our period the results of attacks can be tabulated:

West Coast Route

Section Pisa–Montepescali–Rome. Blocked throughout the period.

Central Route (Florence–Arezzo–Orvieto–Rome)

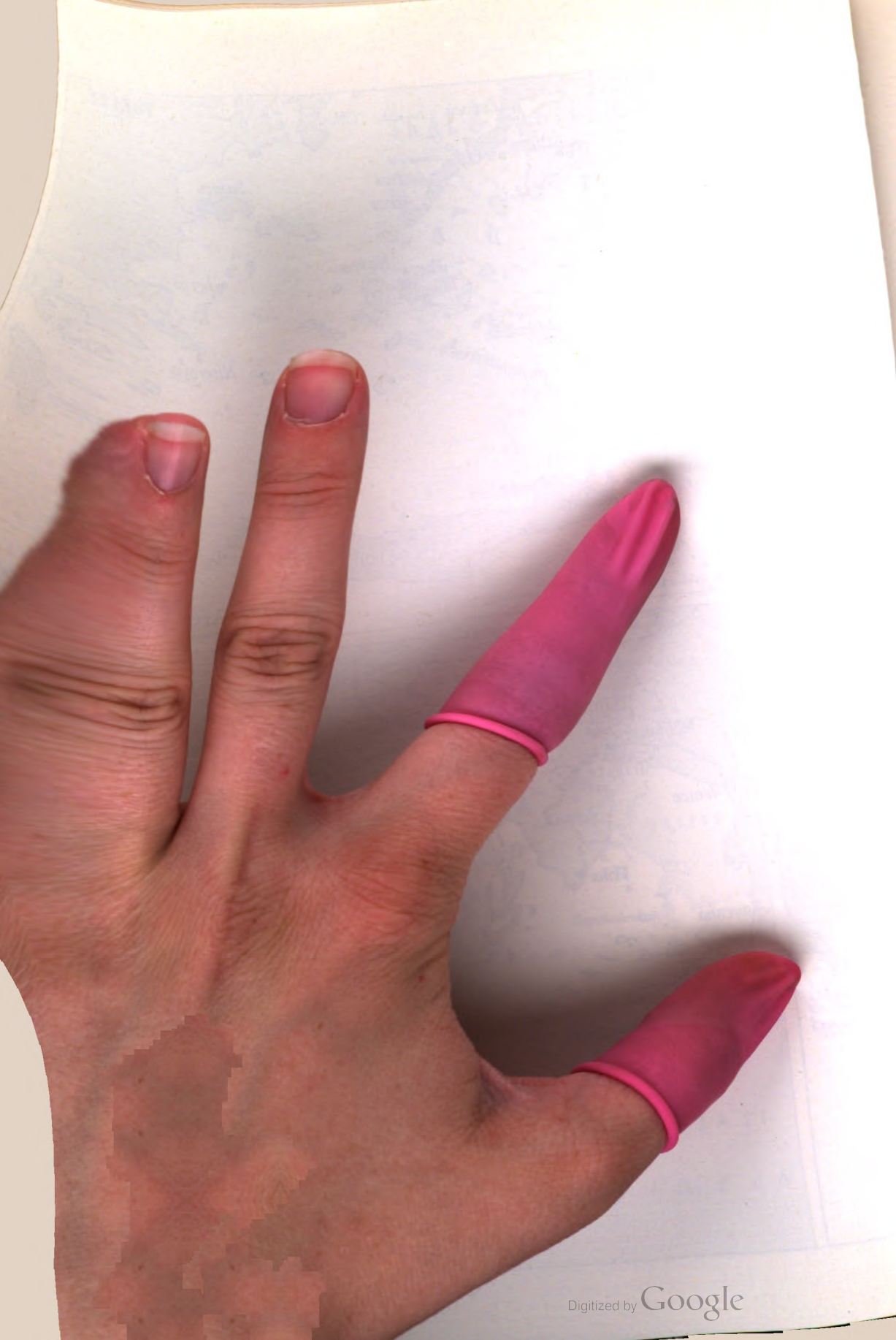
Section Florence–Chiusi. Open on three separate days only.
Section Chiusi–Rome. Blocked throughout.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Alternatives to Central Route

a. Empoli–Asciano–Chiusi. Blocked throughout.

b. Terontola–Perugia–Foligno–Orte:
Section Terontola–Perugia. Blocked throughout.
Section Perugia–Foligno. Blocked from 19th to 29th May.
Section Foligno–Orte. Blocked throughout.

Lateral Route (Pisa–Florence)
Blocked from 24th May onwards.

East Coast Route (Rimini–Ancona). Blocked throughout.

There were routes which were less important than the above which suffered as much. Examples are:
Viterbo–Rome.
Terni–Sulmona
Avezzano–Rome.

This picture of devastation and damage sufficiently explains why the Germans found it almost impossible to move supplies and troops by rail south of Florence.

See Maps 12 *and* 13

Although Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force was free to co-operate whenever required in air operations within Italy in support of the armies, it had an undiminished responsibility for strategic operations which led it to countries outside Italy. The extent of these responsibilities can be measured roughly by the numbers of sorties flown against targets in these 'outside' countries. For the period from dawn 12th May to dawn 5th June the figures are:[87]

	Heavy Bombers	*Medium Bombers*
France	1,782	—
Austria	1,483	35
Hungary	403	42
Rumania	1,004	50
Yugoslavia	730	2*
Total	5,402	129

As a rough comparison of effort, the heavy bombers flew 3,661 sorties against targets in Italy during the same period.

M.A.S.A.F.'s responsibilities outside Italy during the period from dawn 19th May to dawn 5th June comprised operations:†

* Excludes 42 sorties flown by Desert Air Force Marauders by day.

† Royal Air Force, Middle East's very modest effort continued to be almost wholly devoted to ports and shipping, and what land targets were attacked, besides ports, were in the eastern Mediterranean.

Digitized by Google

i. In support of the coming 'Overlord'.
ii. As part of the Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany.
iii. To upset the German L. of C. in Rumania and Hungary.
iv. To support Tito's Partisans in Yugoslavia.
v. To attack oil installations, chosen as complementary to those attacked in the Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany.

Some examples of operations in these classes follow.

Part of the preparations for 'Overlord' was to deny the Germans the railways by which they might reinforce their troops in the area which was invaded. And so, on 25th, 26th and 27th May Fortresses and Liberators from M.A.S.A.F. flew 1,367 sorties against nine groups of marshalling-yards in southern France and dropped 2,829 tons of bombs on them.†[88] Lyons and St. Étienne received the heaviest attacks.

French records say that the attack on St. Étienne on 26th May by 147 Fortresses, which had the marshalling-yard as the main target, caused widespread damage; bombs hit a railway tunnel at Montferre and blocked the line for three weeks. Important railway installations at Châteaucreux and Pont-de-l'Ane were hit also. Moreover of 392 tons of bombs which were dropped about sixty bombs hit a steel works and destroyed offices and workshops. An electrical power-house also was destroyed and electric power was lost for a month. The records also give some of the results of Allied air attacks on the marshalling-yards at Avignon and on two at Marseilles on 27th May. At Avignon 163 Fortresses dropped 245 tons of bombs, partly destroying an engine depot and two bridges, and cutting the main line at four points. Other targets which were partly destroyed were a pharmaceutical factory and a food factory. At Marseilles 51 Liberators dropped 107 tons of bombs on the La Blanchard marshalling-yard and did much damage, destroying the engine house and cutting tracks. 67 Liberators dropped 148 tons of bombs on the St. Charles marshalling-yard and did great damage. The attacks at Marseilles had a tragic result in killing 1,500 people and the tragedy was deepened because the public had not believed that the Allies would ever make such an attack. Slaughter of civilians on both sides was a horrible feature of air warfare. The records which we have mentioned above confirm some of the damage to railways which

† The marshalling-yards and tons of bombs dropped on each were:

Toulon	237 tons
Marseilles (two yards)	255 ,,
Nice	217 ,,
Nîmes	210 ,,
Avignon	245 ,,
Grenoble	142 ,,
St. Étienne	392 ,,
Chambéry	161 ,,
Lyons (five yards)	970 ,,

Digitized by Google

was deduced from air photographs which were taken soon after the attacks. It is nevertheless unlikely that traffic was much interrupted. This unsatisfactory result stems from the fact that unless a marshalling-yard has been saturated with bombs and a large amount of rolling stock has been derailed, damage can quickly be made good with wagons of ballast and spare rails.

The targets given to M.A.S.A.F. as their part in the Combined Bomber Offensive were of four kinds; aircraft factories, a large Air Stores Park, and airfields in Austria; and the oil refineries at Ploesti in Rumania. The attacks against the aircraft industry in Austria were made on 24th, 29th and 30th May.[89] 1,483 sorties were flown and 2,986 tons of bombs were dropped, 1,040 tons of this total upon the Chief Air Stores Park for Italy and the Balkans at Wollersdorff (near Wiener Neustadt).* Every attack was strongly opposed by German fighters and although the bombers had powerful escorts of Lightnings, 60 American aircraft were lost in three days.

It chanced that Allied bombers had last attacked the oil refineries at Ploesti on 18th May, and that as a result of this and previous attacks Hitler was then informed that their output had been halved. He had ordered immediate reinforcements of fighters and anti-aircraft guns, and extra measures of passive air defence such as smoke screens and blast walls. On 31st May Liberators and Fortresses attacked, flying 482 sorties and dropping a total of 1,000 tons of bombs on six plants. Eighteen American aircraft were lost. A summary of the effects of the Allied air offensive against the Rumanian oil industry during the period 5th April 1944 to 19th August 1944 is in Part II Chapter XI.†

---

* Aircraft Industry: targets and tons of bombs dropped on each:

Aircraft Factories	
Atzgersdorf (Vienna). Two attacks	568 tons
Wiener Neustadt	198 „
Pottendorf	109 „
Ebreichsdorf	144 „
Wels	201 „
Neudörfl (near Wiener Neustadt)	66 „
Neunkirchen	71 „
Chief Air Stores Park Three attacks	1,040 „
Airfields	
Muchendorf (near Vienna)	168 „
Graz/Thalerhof	45 „
Bad Vöslau	51 „
Wels	263 „

† Plants attacked at Ploesti and tons of bombs dropped on each:

Romano Americano	229 tons
Dacia Romano	116 „
Redeventa	54 „
Unirea Sperantza	255 „
Xenia	116 „
Concordia Vega	219 „

Digitized by Google

On the night 29th/30th May M.A.S.A.F. resumed minelaying in the Danube, operations which are described in Chapter VII. On 31st May the strategic air force began an offensive against the German rail L. of C. in Hungary and Rumania.[90] On 31st May 13 Liberators dropped 35 tons of bombs on the marshalling-yards at Turnu Severin in south-west Rumania, and on the night 31st May/1st June two R.A.F. Liberators, 11 Halifaxes, and 23 Wellingtons dropped 74 tons of bombs on railway targets in the same neighbourhood. On the night 1st/2nd June it was Hungary's turn. Five R.A.F. Halifaxes illuminated the marshalling-yard at Szolnok, east of Budapest, and then five R.A.F. Liberators and 29 Wellingtons dropped 64 tons of bombs. 13 other Wellingtons distributed 24 tons of bombs on various targets in Hungary.

On 2nd June the attacks were very much heavier. 393 Fortresses and Liberators dropped 805 tons of bombs on four marshalling-yards in Hungary, and 278 of the same types of bombers dropped 566 tons of bombs on three marshalling-yards in Rumania. On the night 2nd/3rd June 10 R.A.F. Liberators and Halifaxes and 27 Wellingtons dropped 48 tons of bombs on quays and tanks for oil storage at Giurgiu on the Danube south of Bucharest.* The results of the short offensive were dislocation of traffic in a wide area and alarm amongst the public in Hungary which had quietly accepted virtual German occupation. The attack on Debrecen was marked by an interesting circumstance. The Fortresses and their escort of long-range Mustangs for the first time in the Mediterranean Theatre flew on from their target to three airfields in Russia, where the Soviet authorities had allowed U.S. Fifteenth Air Force to establish the means of refuelling and rearming. From these Russian airfields the American force attacked a target chosen by the Russians, and some added protection was afforded by Russian fighters. The return of the force to Italy on 11th June will be mentioned in Part II Chapter X.

In Yugoslavia the struggle between the Germans and the Partisans continued savagely and between 19th May and 5th June, dawn to dawn, Allied bombers flew 864 sorties and dropped 1,106 tons of bombs in supporting Tito's forces.[91] Some details of these operations are given in Chapter VII.

---

* Marshalling-yards and tons of bombs dropped on each.

Hungary	
Szolnok	212 tons
Miskolc	215 ,,
Szeged	74 ,,
Debrecen	304 ,,
Rumania	
Simeria	273 ,,
Oradea	67 ,,
Cluj	226 ,,

Digitized by Google

There remain to be mentioned two attacks on the oil refineries at Porto Marghera close to Venice. These plants could produce 500,000 tons yearly, and were the more important because of the damage already done to plants at Trieste and Fiume by Italian saboteurs, and at Ploesti by Allied air attacks. On 19th May 61 Fortresses dropped 161 tons of bombs, destroying machinery and warehouses and setting oil tanks ablaze. On 25th May 68 Liberators attacked again doing much the same damage as the Fortresses had done, and halting rail traffic to Venice.

At this point we end the story of M.A.A.F.'s operations during the six weeks before the opening of Alexander's Spring offensive and then during the twenty-four days of the offensive. The story parades no striking and dramatic events like the destruction by bombing of the Abbey of Mt Cassino in February and of the town of Cassino in March. It tells of a matter vastly more important than such spectacular feats. This is the sustained application of great air power for a purpose which was common to the land, air, and naval forces: the defeat of the enemy's forces in the field when the field comprised land, air, and sea. At one point or another the story illustrates every feature of such an application of air power. To begin with there was the maintenance of supremacy in the air, and although this was easily accomplished it was the principal condition of the air forces' almost complete freedom to operate as they chose. Next the story shows the flexibility with which a dominant air force exerts its power, whether by switching that effort from one type of target to another, or by switching one type of air force, the strategic, to the role of another, the tactical. Tactical operations during our period give examples of every use that can be made of a Tactical Air Force. The span of the examples is very wide, from the quickest and closest co-operation with troops in battle to operations carried on far from the sight of troops which yet contributed directly to the troops' success. At the one end, for example, are the attacks by formations of fighter-bombers called from the Cabrank to attack mortars or guns or troops forming up to counter-attack. At the other end stands the systematic interruption of the enemy's L. of C. from its far-distant starting points to its destinations which were the hands and mouths of troops on the battlefield. In accounts of air operations, air reconnaissance is as a rule worse treated than Cinderella because it is never even allowed to appear at the ball. Here then we may remark an outstanding performance in one branch of the art, the use of tactical reconnaissance aircraft in a new role, to guide formations of fighter-bombers to targets of opportunity. We have noticed the use of the strategic air force in the tactical role, but the story

Digitized by Google

TABLE

Approximate number of sorties flown against and bombloads dropped on targets in Italy,[92] other than ports, during the period dawn 19 May to dawn 5 June, 1944

AIR FORCE	RAILWAY TARGETS	M.T. AND ROADS	TOWNS	DUMPS	AIRFIELDS	GUNS	TROOPS	ENEMY H.Q. & CMD Posts	MISC.	TOTALS
				North of the battle area						
M.A.S.A.F. H.B. (Day)	916(1920.1)	83(185.0)	4(10.7)	59(103.0)	150(272.6)		221(367.0)		66(172.5)	1499(3030.9)
M.A.S.A.F. H.B. (Night)		34(69.1)								34(69.1)
M.A.S.A.F. M.B. (Night)	3(3.6)	162(303.8)							5(9.3)	170(316.7) @
M.A.T.A.F. M.B. (Day)	2011(3638.4)	889(1519.4)		12(21.4)					2(3.6)	2914(5182.8)
M.A.T.A.F. L.B. (Day)	143(115.3)	24(20.1)		72(66.6)						239(202.0)
M.A.T.A.F. L.B. (Night)	90(73.4)	212(161.2)	14(10.7)						7(6.3)	323(251.6)
M.A.T.A.F. F.B. (Day)	1862(848.7)	1248(725.3)	39(16.6)	32(9.9)	11(4.9)				44(19.7)	3236(1625.1)
M.A.C.A.F. F.B. (Day)	19(4.3)			8(1.8)					33(6.9)	60(13.0)
M.A.C.A.F. F.B. (Night)	22(4.8)									22(4.8)
TOTALS	5066(6608.6)	2652(2983.9)	57(38.0)	183(202.7)	161(277.5)		221(367.0)		157(218.3)	8497(10696.0)
				Within the battle area (Direct air support)						
M.A.S.A.F. H.B. (Day)	38(84.0)		47(75.9)				168(363.8)			253(523.7)
M.A.S.A.F. H.B. (Night)		20(44.6)								20(44.6)
M.A.S.A.F. M.B. (Night)		172(288.3)								172(288.3) @
M.A.T.A.F. M.B. (Day)	29(50.0)	665(1132.7)	96(153.7)				192(255.6)			982(1592.0)
M.A.T.A.F. L.B. (Day)	134(107.6)	188(117.2)	34(31.1)	120(91.0)		144(111.9)	48(39.7)		93(62.5)	761(561.0)
M.A.T.A.F. L.B. (Night)	19(16.1)	195(156.7)	48(37.4)							262(210.2)
M.A.T.A.F. F.B. (Day)	695(210.3)	4189(1614.7)	949(300.9)	31(13.0)		490(184.9)	129(47.0)	106(31.4)	187(51.2)	6776(2453.4)
TOTALS	915(468.0)	5429(3354.2)	1174(599.0)	151(104.0)		634(296.8)	537(706.1)	106(31.4)	280(113.7)	9226(5673.2)
GRAND TOTALS	5981(7076.6)	8081(6338.1)	1231(637.0)	334(306.7)	161(277.5)	634(296.8)	758(1073.1)	106(31.4)	437(332.0)	17723(16369.2)

NOTES @ Excludes a total of 12 Wellington flare-dropping sorties.

Digitized by Google

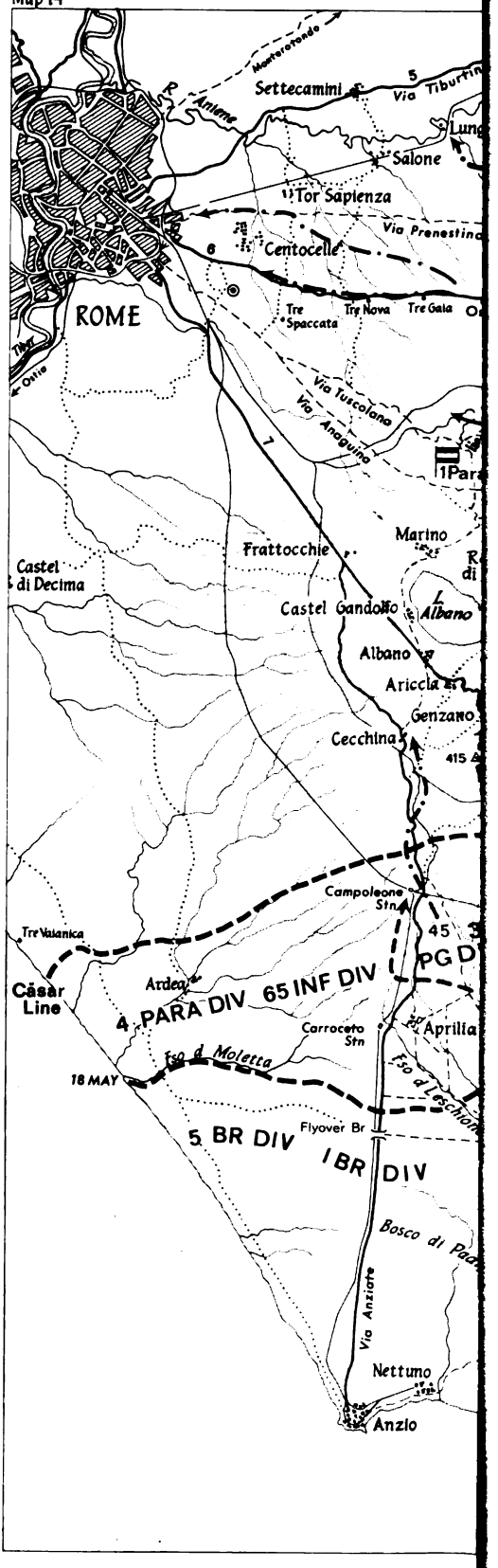
shows most comprehensively its use in its proper role. Strategic operations were carried out not only to help forward Mediterranean strategy, but to serve Allied grand strategy, for example in operations preparatory to 'Overlord' and in those which were part of the Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Map 14



Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

'THE ALLIES ARE IN ROME'

(i)

See Map 14

SINCE early in March 1944 6th U.S. Corps in its beachhead at Anzio and *AOK 14*, which was containing the beachhead, had faced each other in a stalemate. Each worked hard to improve its defences and waged intermittent trench warfare.* Chapter I of this volume describes the role of 6th U.S. Corps in Alexander's Spring offensive.

The Corps, commanded by Major-General Lucian K. Truscott, was reinforced for its coming task.[1] Between 26th April and 7th May Combat Command 'B' (the equivalent of a British Armoured Brigade Group) arrived to complete 1st U.S. Armoured Division, and by 22nd May 36th U.S. Division had arrived in four convoys—'I am trying to dribble them in unseen' signalled Alexander to the Prime Minister. By 22nd May Truscott had the following main formations under his command:

United States

1st U.S. Armoured Division (Major-General Ernest N. Harmon):
1st Armoured Regiment, 13th Armoured Regiment,
6th Armoured Infantry Regiment, *and attached:*
191st, 751st Tank Battalions (U.S.), 46th R.T.R. (British)
3rd U.S. Division (Major-General John W. O'Daniel):
7th, 15th, 30th Infantry Regiments
34th U.S. Division (Major-General Charles W. Ryder):
133rd, 135th, 168th Infantry Regiments
36th U.S. Division (Major-General Fred L. Walker):
141st, 142nd, 143rd Infantry Regiments
45th U.S. Division (Major-General William W. Eagles):
157th, 179th, 180th Infantry Regiments
1st Special Service Force (Brigadier-General Robert T. Frederick):
1st, 2nd, 3rd Regiments

---

* The story of the Anzio beachhead, from the Allied landings in January 1944, to the stalemate of March, is told in *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V, Chapters XVII and XIX.

Digitized by Google

British

1st Division (Brigadier C. E. Loewen, acting from 24th May):
2nd, 3rd, 18th Infantry Brigades
5th Division (Major-General P. G. S. Gregson-Ellis):
13th, 15th, 17th Infantry Brigades

6th U.S. Corps possessed a powerful artillery, summarised in the footnote.*

The British 1st and 5th Divisions were about 3,600 men below establishment owing to a shortage of infantry reinforcements. For this reason they were to be used only in a holding role, and were not to be used north of the Tiber. On 22nd May they were placed directly under the command of 5th Army.

Life in the beachhead was neither easy nor quiet. The whole enclave was within range of the German artillery which kept up irregular harassing fire, mainly upon the so-called rear areas, the harbour and 'hards'. German aircraft in small numbers or singly made tip-and-run raids. This harassing fire caused strain and vexation, and distress when casualties occurred among the wounded in the field hospitals and among doctors, nursing orderlies and nurses.† These feelings were not much allayed by the satisfaction of knowing that the Germans were being much more heavily bombarded by the Corps' artillery and by Allied aircraft. On the perimeter of the beachhead, where in some places Allies and German infantry held positions a mere grenade's throw apart, life was a matter of lying hid by day in cramped and squalid dug-outs, foxholes and trenches, and coming out at night to improve or repair these defences and to go on wearisome fatigues to fetch water, ammunition, food, trench-stores and so on. Operations consisted mainly of patrolling and occasional raids to capture prisoners for the Intelligence staff to question, or simply to inflict casualties. The worst things in this sort of life were boredom and ill-humour and the gnawing wish for it to end in a proper battle or by miraculous transfer to some more agreeable front.

---

* Artillery of 6th U.S. Corps, apart from anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery:

	United States
240-mm howitzer	1 Battery
8-inch howitzer	1 Field Artillery Battalion
155-mm howitzer	7 Field Artillery Battalions
155-mm gun	3 Field Artillery Battalions
105-mm howitzer	18 Field Artillery Battalions
75-mm howitzer	2 Batteries
	British
5.5-inch	1 Medium Regiment
4.5-inch	1 Medium Regiment
25-pdr	7 Field Regiments

† Lieutenant-General Lucian K. Truscott, *Command Missions*, (E. P. Dutton and Co., New York, 1954), p. 357–64.

Digitized by Google

Life however was not entirely nasty, brutish, and short. Units were withdrawn from the line by turns to train for the coming battle and to enjoy some rest and home-made recreation. Amusements were such things as baseball, football, bathing, fishing with explosives, beetle-racing, and concerts by the bands of the American divisions. Much ingenuity was devoted to the interesting occupation of inventing and making devices which might be useful in breaking through the German defences. Some of these devices were Bailey bridges which tanks could carry and launch; 'Snakes', which were lengths of four-inch pipe filled with explosive, to be pushed across minefields by tanks and then fired to detonate the mines thus making gaps; armoured battle-sleds on which infantry lying prone could be towed by tanks across bullet-swept ground. Administrative preparations went briskly on. Reserves of supplies and stores were accumulated to a stock sufficient for thirty days, and artillery ammunition was dumped on a scale of 600 r.p.g. The cargoes discharged from ships and craft surpassed the estimates in spite of spells of bad weather and the German harassing fire on the port of Anzio and the beaches.

As soon as Alexander had given 6th U.S. Corps the task of breaking out from the bridgehead and advancing upon Valmontone, Truscott, under Clark's direction, prepared a plan for this operation (code name 'Buffalo').[2] But the American Commanders believed that circumstances might occur in which it might be possible to do more than thrust towards Valmontone. If the Germans withdrew quickly before 5th and 8th Armies' onslaught to positions in the Alban hills, 6th U.S. Corps might be able to turn these by attacking further west, either on the axis Carroceto–Campoleone–Rome (code name 'Turtle') or Ardea–Rome (code name 'Crawdad'). Truscott therefore made plans for 'Turtle' and 'Crawdad' as well as for 'Buffalo'. However he has written in his memoirs that Alexander visited him on 5th May and let him 'know very quietly and firmly that there was only one direction in which the attack should or would be launched, . . . from Cisterna to cut Highway 6 in the vicinity of Valmontone in the rear of the German main forces'. Truscott reported this ruling to Clark who, according to Truscott 'was irked at General Alexander's "interference" in his American chain of command'. Truscott then devoted himself to the attack on Valmontone for which his plan, in outline, was as follows.

The object of 6th U.S. Corps was to cut Highway 6 near Valmontone.[3] The first step was to bite out of the German lines of circumvallation a segment, named the 'X-Y Line' by the Americans, on

Digitized by Google

either side of Cisterna. The base of the segment was an eight-mile stretch of the railway line which lay south of Cisterna, and it extended four miles eastwards from the town and four miles westwards from it. The bite was about two miles deep. 3rd U.S. Division was to capture Cisterna and La Villa about a mile and half west of it, and was to advance to a depth of about two miles northwards. This division, roughly speaking, was the central attacking force and on its right would be the Special Service Force, and on its left would be 1st U.S. Armoured Division and then 45th U.S. Division on the left of the armour. The Special Service Force's task was to advance north-eastwards to Highway 7 and to ward off counter-attacks by whatever German formation was holding positions on the eastern bank of the Mussolini Canal.* On the left of 3rd U.S. Division, 1st Armoured Division reinforced by 135th Infantry (from 34th U.S. Division) was to attack northwards to cut Highway 7 north-west of Cisterna and was then to reconnoitre towards Giulianello, Velletri, and Campoleone. 45th U.S. Division was to expand the left flank of the Armoured Division's penetration by advancing from the beachhead's perimeter up the Carano wadi to the railway line. All these attacks would make up the first phase of 6th U.S. Corps' offensive.

In the second phase 36th U.S. Division was to pass through 3rd U.S. Division and carry the attack north-eastwards through Cori, nearly six miles distant from Cisterna. 1st U.S. Armoured Division was to advance to a line between Giulianello and Velletri. The Special Service Force, still on 6th U.S. Corps' right flank, was to advance to Mt Arrestino, south-east of Cori. When all these moves had been completed, 1st U.S. Armoured Division, and 3rd and 36th U.S. Divisions would unite to capture Artena, about seven miles north of Cori. The Special Service Force might remain on Mt Arrestino or might advance to Montelanico and Segni. How the final thrust to Valmontone would be made would depend on what happened in the battle at Artena.

Such was Truscott's outline plan, and at the beginning of May his Corps was disposed in the following way (*see Map 14*). The perimeter of the beachhead, west to east, ran from the sea up the Fosso della Moletta to the Via Anziate at a point a little north of 'Flyover Bridge', thence eastwards for about three miles to the

* The 1st Special Service Force was composed of picked U.S. and Canadian troops, trained to undertake long-range sabotage in snow-covered country, and as skiers and parachutists. Its three Regiments each consisted of two 2-company battalions and one administrative battalion. Arms were rifles, carbines, light machine guns, 60-mm mortars, and rocket launchers. The Canadian component was 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion, which fluctuated between strengths of 600–800 all ranks. This unit was distributed among the Force's three Regiments.

Digitized by Google

Fosso del Leschione, and thence north-east to a point near Carano. From this point the perimeter ran south of east to the Mussolini Canal and then down the west bank of the canal to the sea well east of Torre di Foce Verde. The perimeter was held in the order west to east: 5th Division west of the Via Anziate, 1st Division astride the Via Anziate, then 45th and 34th U.S. Divisions as far as the Mussolini Canal, and then by the American 36th Engineer Regiment to the sea.[4] 3rd U.S. Division and the Special Service Force lay in reserve in the eastern half of the beachhead, and 1st U.S. Armoured Division and 36th U.S. Division were in reserve in the Bosco di Padiglione north of Anzio. It can therefore be seen that 1st U.S. Armoured Division, 3rd U.S. Division, the Special Service Force, and 36th U.S. Division would have to move in order to be correctly placed to begin the offensive according to Truscott's plan. The moves would need to be made at night if secrecy was to be preserved, because the Germans overlooked the beachhead from various points of higher ground.

The terrain which lay before 6th U.S. Corps rose in general towards the terminal spurs of the Lepini mountains to the north-east, and towards the Alban hills to the north and north-west.[5] Both of these hilly tracts were about seven miles distant from the perimeter of the beachhead. The Lepini mountains' terminal spurs extend from Mt Arrestino (Pt 855) to Rocca Massima and the hills at Artena, a place which stands 1,300 feet above sea level. The lower slopes of these mountains and hills are clothed, for the most part, in olive groves, and the upper slopes in scrub which gives way to bare and rocky crests and ridges. The mountains and hills are steep and no roads cross them from south to north. The Alban hills are a mass of volcanic rock rising as high as 3,100 feet, and forming the rim of a great basin in which lie the lakes of Albano and Nemi. The slopes of these hills are covered with vegetation, and the basin is well cultivated. The whole mass is some sixteen miles wide from east to west, and twelve miles deep from north to south. It is well provided with roads and tracks as befits a long settled and well populated region where men have built every type of dwelling from splendid villas to simple farms.

The ground south of a line from Cisterna to Campoleone station was fairly open and level, cultivated, and dotted with copses and patches of scrub. Several dry or partly dry watercourses ran north to south in steep-sided gullies and three ridges, formed in ancient times by flows of lava, ran southwards from the Alban hills through Albano. Lanuvio, and Velletri until they merged in the plain. These ridges were large features rising in some places to a height of

Digitized by Google

six hundred feet. Their sides were steep and covered with scrub, but their broad crests had been tilled for corn.

North-eastwards, in the general direction which the American advance might take, a valley opened between Cori and Velletri and ran onwards between the Lepini mountains' last spurs and the Alban hills. In the middle of the valley, on the road joining Cori and Velletri, stood the village of Giulianello, and at the valley's north-eastern end stood Artena and Valmontone. Between Cori and Velletri the country was full of vineyards and clumps of trees, and was slashed by gullies. Cornfields lay north of Giulianello, but between Artena and Highway 6 the ground became rougher and gullies reappeared.

The whole area was well supplied with roads. In the north Highway 6 passed through Valmontone and then ran north of the Alban hills to Rome. There was a road through the valley from Velletri to Artena and Valmontone. A lateral road linked Cori, Giulianello, and Velletri, where it joined Highway 7. Highway 7 ran through Cisterna and Velletri, and then south of the Alban hills to Rome passing through Genzano, Ariccia, and Albano. The Via Anziate ran from Anzio to Highway 7 near Frattocchie, and threw out branches to Lanuvio, Genzano, Ariccia, and Albano. Inside 6th U.S. Corps' bridgehead the engineers had improved the secondary roads which ran northwards, and from flank to flank.

Taken as a whole the terrain of the battlefield was more difficult than maps and air photographs suggested. The multitude of ridges and gullies unexpectedly proved to be troublesome obstacles to armour, and toilsome for infantry, besides being well suited for defence. Moreover the steadily rising ground gave the Germans the invaluable advantage of excellent observation.

(ii)

After the failure of von Mackensen's offensive in March four of his divisions had been removed to other tasks: 114th Jäger Division to *AOK 10*, 26th Panzer and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions to Kesselring's Army Group reserve, and the Hermann Göring Panzer Division to *Armeegruppe von Zangen* as Army Group reserve.[6] The German force which contained 6th U.S. Corps was therefore:

1st Parachute Corps (General Alfred Schlemm):
- 4th Parachute Division (Major-General Heinrich Trettner):
  - 10th, 11th, 12th Parachute Regiments, each of three battalions.
- 65th Infantry Division (Major-General Hellmuth Pfeifer):
  - 145th, 146th, 147th Grenadier Regiments, each of two battalions.
  - 1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of two battalions.

Digitized by Google

3rd Panzer Grenadier Division (Lieutenant-General Fritz-Huber Gräser):
8th, 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiments, each of two battalions.
Infantry Lehr Regiment of three battalions.

76th Panzer Corps (General Traugott Herr):

362nd Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Heinrich Greiner):
954th, 955th, 956th Grenadier Regiments, each of two battalions.

715th Infantry Division (Major-General Hans-George Hildebrandt):
725th, 735th Grenadier Regiments, each of three battalions.
1028th Panzer Grenadier Regiment.

Besides the above, 92nd Infantry Division (Lieutenant-General Werner Göritz) was forming 1059th and 1060th Grenadier Regiments with cadres of 1026th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. It was not yet fit for battle. At the end of March 1944 the artillery consisted, besides anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery, of about 323 field guns, to which were added 61 *nebelwerfer*. No infantry division was at full strength, and before 6th U.S. Corps attacked two regiments (8th and 1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiments) had been withdrawn from 1st Parachute Corps to face 2nd U.S. Corps in the Lepini mountains. von Mackensen felt aggrieved by the number of reinforcements which he had been ordered to send to *AOK 10* and by the increase in the front which he had to defend. Whatever the cause, his relations with Kesselring were not good.*

The German defences which enclosed the beachhead had been dug with pick and shovel supplemented by mechanical earth-shifting equipment. There were no dismounted tank-turrets, steel bunkers, and machine gun nests like those in the Hitler Line, and concrete field works were few except in the sector Lanuvio–Velletri. There were several belts of mutually supporting strongpoints, each large enough to hold a platoon and four machine guns, and smaller posts had been dug ahead of the platoon strongpoints. Most of the strongpoints were protected by wire and anti-personnel mines. All likely tank-runs were sown with anti-tank mines. The belts of strongpoints were not very deep although the final defences formed part of the Cäsar Line which we describe a little later.

---

* The service background of the two men may have had something to do with the antipathy between them. von Mackensen was the son of Field-Marshal von Mackensen, a distinguished commander in World War I. He had joined a famous regiment of the old German Army, the Death's Head Hussars, in 1908 by election by its officers—the method by which aristocratic candidates entered the army. Kesselring, son of a schoolmaster, had entered by a humbler door as an 'aspirant officer' in the 2nd Bavarian Foot Artillery Regiment. He transferred to the German Air Force in 1933.

Digitized by Google

AOK 14's dispositions around the Allied beachhead were from west to east:

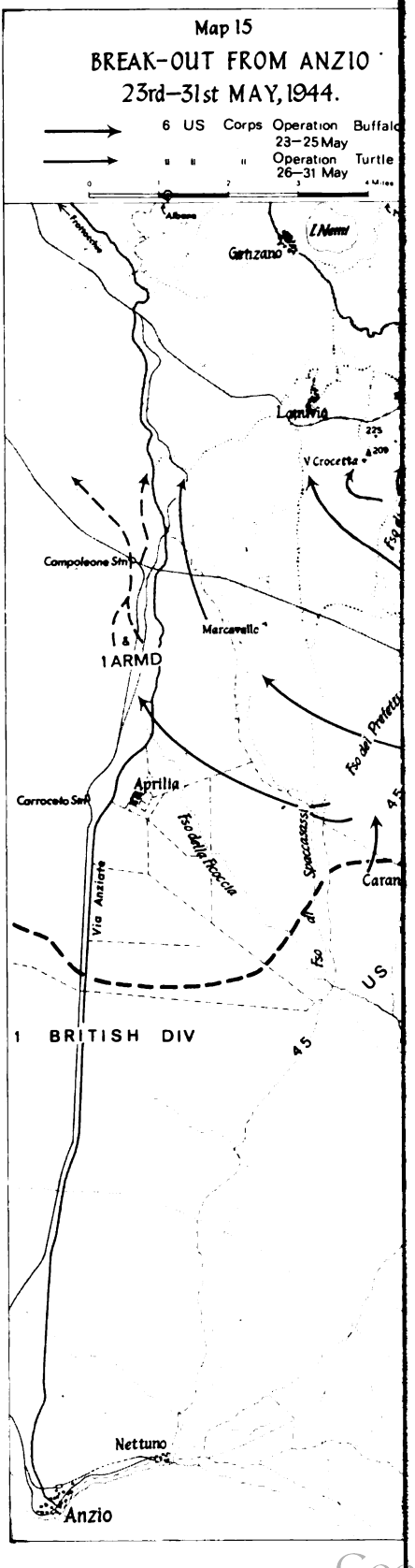
1st Parachute Corps	
4th Parachute Division	Along the Fosso della Moletta
65th Infantry Division	Astride the Via Anziate
3rd Panzer Grenadier Division	From 65th Infantry Division's left (eastern) flank to the inter-Corps boundary north of Carano.
76th Panzer Corps	
362nd Infantry Division	In and around Cisterna
715th Infantry Division	Along the east bank of the Mussolini Canal.

We have left the young 92nd Infantry Division out of the count because it was not yet well enough trained for battle, and was watching the coast north of the Tiber. Thus five German divisions faced seven Allied divisions including one armoured, and the Special Service Force. On 20th May Kesselring gave 29th Panzer Grenadier Division to von Mackensen but this reinforcement had strings attached because the division was to be used only to oppose 2nd U.S. Corps in the southern part of *AOK 14's* sector which Kesselring had enlarged on 21st May.

When 5th and 8th Armies began their attacks on *AOK 10* on 11th May von Mackensen told Kesselring that *AOK 14* also must expect an attack, accompanied by landings in rear of *AOK 10* or on the coast between Anzio beachhead and the Civitavecchia area.[7] However the days passed without an attack and even on 22nd May nothing occurred to suggest the events of the morrow. *AOK 14* reported skirmishes by patrols on 76th Panzer Corps' front and lively motor traffic between Nettuno and Le Ferriere, but the numbers of ships and craft lying off Anzio were not unusual. The operations of the Allied air forces seemed to be connected with the operations of 2nd U.S. Corps. von Mackensen believed that when 6th U.S. Corps attacked, it would make its main thrust northwards up the Via Anziate and for this reason he had disposed his most experienced troops, 65th Infantry Division and 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division, to hold that approach. He believed that attacks in other sectors would be diversions. Even when American guns opened fire on 23rd May this did not at once reveal the sector of Truscott's main attack because of a stratagem which General Penney had suggested when he was commanding 1st Division and which Truscott adopted. This was that all the artillery in the beachhead should fairly often bombard various targets with three rounds or so per gun. The Germans soon, it seemed, became accustomed to these 'hates' and on 23rd May thought for the moment that the bombardment was just one more. At Kesselring's conference on 18th May von Macken-

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

sen had nothing to say about the situation except to complain about his dangerously small reserves. His complaint did not save him from having to send reinforcements to *AOK 10* (1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 60th Engineer Battalion, 56th Werfer Regiment) and it was not until 23rd May that Kesselring told him that Hitler had agreed that the Hermann Göring Panzer Division could move southwards from Leghorn. This move however was of no immediate advantage to von Mackensen because the division was to be in Army Group reserve near Viterbo.

Between 24th and 26th May a German defensive line which we have so far mentioned only in passing becomes important in the operations of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14*. This is the Cäsar Line, named after the letter C in the German military phonetic alphabet.[8] This line was intended to span Italy south of Rome from coast to coast and its trace, on the map only, was, from west to east, Torre Vaianica –Lanuvio–Velletri–Labico–Subiaco–Avezzano–the River Saline, north-west of Pescara.

The Cäsar Line had been thought of as early as December 1943 when Kesselring's Chief of Staff announced that it would be reconnoitred and plotted by General Bessell, an engineer officer who flits like a supervisory ghost through the early stages of many German defensive lines in Italy.[9] There was no great hurry about setting to work because other defensive lines—Gustav, Hitler, even the Foro—were much more important. During February 1944 the German High Command decided that the Cäsar Line would be the last barrier south of Rome, and in the first week of March Kesselring directed that work on it must be hastened and that *AOK 14* would be responsible for the sector from the west coast to Artena, and *AOK 10* for the sector from Artena to Pescara. He declared that the line must be defensible by 30th April. Materials were allotted and German technical units. *Ostruppen* battalions, Italian construction battalions, and Italian labourers were set to work. In spite of these measures the work seems to have been carried on in a very half-hearted way. We do not know how far the defences had advanced by 12th May but can guess that they were very incomplete, because the size of the task was well beyond the available resources in material, men and, above all, time.

(iii)

On 18th May Alexander told Mr. Churchill that 6th U.S. Corps would 'punch out to get astride enemy's communications to Rome' when the right moment came.[10] On 19th May he signalled to Clark

Digitized by Google

that 'The C-in-C directs that the attack from the Anzio bridgehead on Cori and Valmontone is to be launched on the night of 21/22 May or on the morning of 22 May',[11] thus giving Clark the choice of beginning the operation in darkness or daylight. However later on the 19th he decided that the Canadian Corps, the French Expeditionary Corps, and 2nd U.S. Corps had not yet created a situation in which 6th U.S. Corps' intervention might be decisive, and that its offensive must be postponed. Truscott moreover wanted 72 hours in which to deploy his troops for the attack because they would have to move at night if there was to be any hope of achieving a surprise. And so it was not until the early evening of 21st May that Truscott received firm orders to begin his operation 'Buffalo' on 23rd May. Clark has written of Alexander's order of the 19th 'I was shocked that Alexander had made this decision without reference to me'.* He was over-sensitive. Alexander had made it clear in his Operation Order No. 1 dated 5th May that he reserved for himself the decision to launch 6th U.S. Corps' attack.

See Map 15

Truscott made his final dispositions during the night 21st/22nd May, and 1st U.S. Armoured Division, 3rd U.S. Division and the Special Service Force lay hidden in their jumping-off positions during the 22nd May.[12] At daybreak (5.38 a.m.) on 23rd May a fine drizzle was falling and at 5.45 a.m. the American and British artillery opened fire. Truscott has described that moment: 'There was a crash of thunder and bright lightning flashes against the sky . . . as more than a thousand guns, infantry cannon, mortars, tanks, and tank destroyers opened fire'.[13] This continued until 6.26 a.m. when a force of light bombers and fighter-bombers bombed and strafed Cisterna and its neighbourhood. Then at 6.30 a.m. the American divisions advanced.

It suffices to say of 45th U.S. Division's diversionary attack that by the evening it had gained its objectives on the Cisterna–Campoleone railway line and had dug in there to hold on during the 24th and 25th May. In 1st U.S. Armoured Division Combat Command 'B' advanced on the right with its right flank on the Fosso Femminamorta and Combat Command 'A' on the left.† Combat

* General Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk*, (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1950), p. 351.

† Combat Command 'B' (Brigadier-General Frank W. Allen) included:
13th Armoured Regiment (less 3rd Battalion) and 6th Armoured Infantry Regiment (less 2nd Battalion).
Combat Command 'A' (Colonel Maurice W. Daniel) included:
1st Armoured Regiment and 135th Infantry Regiment (from 34th U.S. Division) (less 3rd Battalion).
The divisional reserve (Colonel Hamilton H. Howze) was composed of:
3rd Battalion 13th Armoured Regiment, 2nd Battalion 6th Armoured Infantry Regiment, 3rd Battalion 135th Infantry Regiment.

Digitized by Google

Command 'B' was held up until late in the morning while engineers made gaps for it in a German minefield, and then it advanced to points on the railway. Combat Command 'A' used 'Snakes' to make gaps in the minefield, and tanks and infantry went forward in close co-operation. By early afternoon its tanks had reached the railway and its infantry points about five hundred yards north of it. The Combat Command halted in these positions for the night. During the day 11 of the armoured division's tanks were destroyed and 44 were damaged.

3rd U.S. Division advanced to attack with two battalions from each of its infantry regiments in line abreast: on the right 15th Infantry, in the centre 7th Infantry, and on the left 30th Infantry.[14] The German 362nd Infantry Division, in and about Cisterna, resisted stubbornly and the Americans gained ground slowly but steadily. 15th Infantry reached Highway 7, south of Cisterna, after dark. 7th Infantry followed the line of the road leading north from Isola Bella, meeting heavy fire from scattered houses. By midnight 23rd/24th May its 2nd Battalion had advanced about 1,500 yards and then reorganized to continue its advance on the 24th. 3rd Battalion matched its sister battalion's progress but swung left after dark to the Ponte Rotto road where it was held up by a group of German tanks and infantry. 30th Infantry captured Ponte Rotto itself. The day's hard fighting cost 3rd U.S. Division 950 casualties but the division felt that it had made a good beginning.

On the extreme right the Special Service Force reached the railway, north of Highway 7, by midday. During the afternoon it repulsed a counter-attack. Its task on the 24th was to advance to Mt Arrestino, and it was relieved, therefore, by two battalions from 34th U.S. Division.

23rd May was a very important day in the execution of Alexander's plans and at 7.30 p.m. he signalled to Sir Alan Brooke:

> 'The pincer movement from Pontecorvo on the one side and Anzio on the other appears to have been nicely timed, but I am not entirely satisfied with the speed of progress on both flanks. To gain a decisive victory a rapid breakthrough on both flanks is necessary, and we are out for the big prize in the battle.'[15]

On the German side the day had been unpleasant.[16] 362nd Infantry Division's defences had been breached on a front of about 2½ miles, and 715th Infantry Division's front on the Mussolini Canal (such was the report) had been broken. von Mackensen's estimate of casualties was very high: 50 per cent in 362nd Infantry Division and 60 per cent in 715th Infantry Division. The estimate testified to the ferocity of the Allies' artillery and air bombardments. von Mackensen passed on to Kesselring a proposal from Herr that

Digitized by Google

76th Panzer Corps should disengage, and concentrate near Sezze, but Kesselring vetoed it. He told von Mackensen that 362nd Infantry Division must re-establish its front, and that he must reinforce it, for this purpose, with units from his western flank, that is to say from 1st Parachute Corps. von Mackensen objected that the two British divisions on this flank might attack at any moment, but nevertheless he ordered 29th Panzer Grenadier Division's reconnaissance battalion to join 362nd Infantry Division, and 1st Parachute Corps to prepare to send units from 4th Parachute Division and 65th Infantry Division. To replace whatever units he might send he called forward a regiment of 92nd Infantry Division. He told Herr and Schlemm that the Americans must be prevented from breaking through to Velletri, and that they must once more be shut up within their beachhead. Kesselring was in a puzzled mood as the evening drew on for at 8 p.m. he remarked, on the telephone to von Vietinghoff 'contrary to all expectations things do not look good on Mackensen's front'.[17]

On 24th May 6th U.S. Corps resumed its attack at 5.30 a.m. after a thirty-minute artillery preparation.[18] By noon 1st U.S. Armoured Division crossed Highway 7, and its thrust then diverged. Combat Command 'B' swung to its right and by nightfall reached Colle Pautaleo on the Cisterna-Cori road. Combat Command 'A' headed for Velletri but found the 'going' difficult and slow while the Germans, in particular their anti-tank gunners, were tenacious. Combat Command 'A' gained no more than a mile. In 3rd U.S. Division the 30th Infantry bypassed La Villa and reached Highway 7 and from there 3rd Battalion followed Combat Command 'B'. In 7th Infantry 1st Battalion captured La Villa and then advanced to Highway 7, which it blocked and there its 3rd Battalion joined it. 2nd Battalion closed in on the south-western outskirts of Cisterna. On the eastern side of Cisterna 34th U.S. Division continued to relieve the Special Service Force, and also pushed 3rd Battalion 133rd Infantry northwards along the Mussolini Canal to the neighbourhood of Castellone. By nightfall on 24th May 6th U.S. Corps had reached its X–Y Line. Alexander's evening signal to Sir Alan Brooke began with the words 'I am more satisfied with the speed and progress of operations today'.[19]

The information which senior German commanders received from the battlefield was patchy and disconnected probably because of the damage which the Allied artillery and aircraft were inflicting on headquarters and communications.[20] It seemed plain however that 362nd Infantry Division's 954th Grenadier Regiment was trapped in Cisterna. The Americans had broken through this division's front to Castello, north-west of Cisterna, and 715th Infantry Division had been unable to stop an unidentified American formation which was

Digitized by Google

thrusting along the bank of the Mussolini Canal. Despite Kesselring's veto of 23rd May of a withdrawal to Sezze, von Mackensen authorised 76th Panzer Corps to retreat the next evening. He ordered Herr to hold a line from Sezze to Priverno and thence to Colle Calvello, (*see Map 11*), there to make touch with *AOK 10*. The unhappy Herr had therefore to try to hold his own against 6th U.S. Corps on his right hand and 2nd U.S. Corps on his left, and he had only three divisions for the task.

At this point the sequence and timing of the German High Command's interventions is confused. During the afternoon of 24th May Westphal, Kesselring's Chief of Staff, had received from Jodl Hitler's directive that there were to be no further retreats without Kesselring's express sanction or his own.[21] Yet on the 24th Hitler also accepted proposals from *OKW* which were based on the assumption that retreat to the Cäsar Line could no longer be avoided. In this Hitler was doing no more than using the discretion which he had allowed himself to sanction retreats, but the effect was unsettling. Kesselring passed on the new policy to his Armies in directives issued on 25th, 26th and 27th May. He also stated that the Cäsar Line must be held at all costs and that Hitler insisted that the troops must show 'a fanatical will to defend' the ground in front of the Line, especially in the area Velletri–Valmontone.

On 25th May Combat Command 'A' of 1st U.S. Armoured Division followed and fought the part of 362nd Infantry Division which had retreated towards Velletri.[22] It was slow work because the German anti-tank gunners again distinguished themselves and tanks and infantry constantly counter-attacked the Americans. Combat Command 'A' did not advance very far. On the opposite flank Combat Command 'B', strengthened by units from the divisional reserve, had better fortune. 3rd Battalion, 13th Armoured Regiment by the early afternoon reached the Cori–Giulianello road, a short distance from Giulianello and then waited for the infantry to catch up. A company of 81st Armoured Reconnaissance Battalion, followed by 1st Battalion, 13th Armoured Regiment, also drove northwards and cut the Giulianello road a little west of Giulianello. During the night of 24th/25th May 34th U.S. Division had moved up to the X–Y Line and early on the 25th posted 168th Infantry on the right of Highway 7 and 135th Infantry on the left. This action guarded against the possibility of a deep German counter-thrust and also deprived 954th Grenadier Regiment of any chance of escaping from Cisterna. This regiment decided to go down fighting and fought 7th Infantry (3rd U.S. Division) from house to house until the survivors surrendered at 7 p.m. While this action was raging

Digitized by Google

3rd Reconnaissance Troop and 15th and 30th Infantry (each less a battalion) advanced northwards to Cori. Here, towards dusk, they encountered 1060th Grenadier Regiment (from 92nd Infantry Division) and the Hermann Göring Division's Reconnaissance Battalion. These units from the rear had been sent into action without any chance of reconnoitring the unfamiliar ground, and without definite orders. They scattered like chaff before the American onslaught and reeled back towards Artena. On 6th U.S. Corps' right flank the Special Service Force reached Mt Arrestino by dusk. During the day U.S. XII Tactical Air Command found splendid targets on the battlefield. The Cori–Giulianello and Giulianello–Valmontone roads were full of German transport which the American light-bombers and fighter-bombers savaged. On the morning of 26th May Runkel, 76th Panzer Corps' Chief of Staff, told Hauser, Chief of Staff at *AOK 14*, that the Giulianello–Valmontone road was blocked by craters and burnt-out vehicles, and that Highway 6 was badly damaged by bombs dropped near Valmontone.[23] In conversation with von Senger on the following day, Wentzell mentioned a loss figure of 160 vehicles, possibly of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division.

On the 25th there occurred a memorable meeting. On this morning 85th U.S. Division, having occupied Terracina, sent 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron speeding westwards along the coast road. At 7.31 a.m. near Borgo Grappa (*see Map 14*) the squadron met a small force, Brett Force, which had been sent out from 6th U.S. Corps.*[24] In this manner the main body of 5th Army made contact with 6th U.S. Corps 125 days after that Corps had landed at Anzio. In planning it had been hoped that the contact would be made between ten and thirty days after the landing.

On 25th May, therefore, Truscott had gained all the first objectives of his 'Buffalo' plan. He intended to drive on to complete the operation when Clark suddenly intervened. Truscott describes what occurred in his memoirs.†

As the growing success of his Corps became unmistakable on 25th May Truscott felt that 'By the following morning, we would be astride the German line of withdrawal through Valmontone'. He returned to his headquarters, from visiting the front, late in the afternoon of the 25th and found there Brigadier-General Brann of the Operations Section of 5th Army's Staff. Brann told him that Clark wished him to block Highway 6 with 3rd U.S. Division and the Special Service Force and to mount the 'Turtle' operation as

---

* *Brett Force:* 1st Battalion, 36th Engineers, detachment of U.S. anti-tank guns, detachment of 1st Reconnaissance Regiment (British) from 1st Division.

† Truscott: *Command Missions* (*op. cit.*) Chapter 6.

Digitized by Google

soon as he could, that is to say an attack on the axis Carroceto–Campoleone–Rome. Truscott

> 'protested that the conditions were not right. There was no evidence of any withdrawal [by the enemy] from the western part of the beachhead, nor was there evidence of any concentration in the Valmontone area except light reconnaissance elements of the Hermann Göring Division. This was no time to drive to the north-west where the enemy was still strong; we should pour our maximum power into the Valmontone Gap to ensure the destruction of the retreating German army. I would not comply with the order without first talking to General Clark in person . . .'[25]

Brann then said that Clark was not at his Command Post in the beachhead and was out of communication.* Truscott therefore prepared to execute the 'Turtle' plan but he was disturbed, for his memoirs continue:

> 'Such was the order that turned the main effort of the beachhead forces from the Valmontone Gap and prevented the destruction of the German X Army.'

Strong words.

At 6.15 p.m. Truscott issued a warning order for the new attack to begin on 27th May but Clark later decided that it would begin on the 26th.[27] His Operations Instruction No. 24 states:

> '1. The enemy forces opposing the beachhead offensive in the Cisterna-Cori area have been decisively defeated. The beachhead and main 5th Army forces have joined. The overwhelming success of the current battle makes it possible to continue Operation Buffalo with powerful forces and to launch a new attack along the most direct route to Rome.
> '2. Not later than 261200B [ie noon 26th May], VI Corps will attack to seize initially the general line Lanuvio–Campoleone Station and from that general line press on vigorously on Rome. Plans for this operation will include an attack (on Army Order) generally from the area of Lanuvio to seize the Colli Laziali mountain mass [Alban hills] . . .'

The first paragraph of this instruction gives Clark's military reason for departing from Alexander's orders. It could be said to amount to little more than placing the most favourable construction that was possible upon events by asserting that the promising beginning of Truscott's offensive was a decisive defeat of part of *AOK 14*. Nevertheless, to be over-fair to Clark, it could also be said that with the arrival of 2nd U.S. Corps in the bridgehead he would

---

* Clark had flown to his main Command Post to explain his new operation to his Chief of Staff.[26]

Digitized by Google

have the additional strength to carry out more ambitious plans. Clark however gives very candidly in his memoirs the compelling reason for his action. He writes:

> 'We had massed all of our strength to take Rome. We were keyed up, and in the heat of battle there were almost certain to be clashes of personalities and ideas over this all-out drive. We not only wanted the honour of capturing Rome, but we felt that we more than deserved it; . . . My own feeling was that nothing was going to stop us on our push toward the Italian capital. Not only did we intend to become the first army in fifteen centuries to seize Rome from the south, but we intended to see that the people back home knew that it was the Fifth Army that did the job and knew the price that had been paid for it.'

and again:

> '. . . I was determined that the Fifth Army was going to capture Rome and I probably was overly sensitive to indications that practically everybody else was trying to get into the act. These indications mounted rapidly in the next few days and I had my hands full.'*

The second passage is a fantasy. No one except perhaps Juin 'was trying to get into the act'. Alexander had stated during planning and in his operation order of 5th May that 8th Army would advance to an area east of Rome, then on the axis Terni–Perugia, and then to Ancona and Florence.† The first passage quoted proves plainly enough that Clark spoiled the fulfilment of Alexander's plan in order to obtain for himself and his army the triumph of being the first to enter Rome.

Clark's thirst for glory makes it interesting to see what value some more highly placed personages attached to Rome. On 27th May Mr. Churchill, in a signal to Alexander, remarked 'A cop [destruction and capture of German forces] is much more important than Rome which would anyhow come as its consequence. The cop is the one thing that matters'.[28] On the 28th he expressed himself more strongly:

> '. . . I should feel myself wanting in comradeship if I did not let you know that the glory of this battle, already great, will be measured not by the capture of Rome or the juncture with the bridgehead but by the number of German divisions cut off. I am sure you will have revolved all this in your mind, and perhaps you have already acted in this way. Nevertheless I feel that I ought to tell you that "It is the cop that counts".'

---

* Clark: *Calculated Risk* (*op. cit.*), p. 352, 357.

† See p. 12 and 57.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Alexander replied that his aim had always been to destroy the German army in the field and went on:

> 'Except for the use of roads through Rome, battle formations are not to go into the city. Further I am considering the advisability of only mentioning capture of Rome in my Military communique amongst other inhabited localities taken by my Armies in their stride from day to day . . .'[29]

Mr. Churchill then quickly put on his political spectacles and through them saw Rome as something more than an inhabited locality. He replied on 31st May.:

> 'The capture of Rome is a vast, world-wide event and should not be minimized. I hope that British as well as Americans will enter the city simultaneously . . . Nevertheless, as you rightly state, the destruction of the German army in the field gives us Rome and the rest thrown in . . .'[30]

Juin, commander of the third largest Allied contingent, had his peculiar point of view. He was afraid that Alexander and Clark were in league to side-track the F.E.C. before Rome was reached, and that Anglo-American rivalry was preventing the proper tactical decisions, that is to say his own, from being taken. On 30th May he signalled to de Gaulle:

> '. . . *Compétition de plus en plus aiguë des Anglais et des Américains dans la course finale pour Rome menace d'avoir répercussions fâcheuses sur emploi C.E.F. . . . il serait regrettable que rivalité anglo-américaine pour Rome aboutît à nous frustrer de toute action d'ensemble au dernier moment . . .*'*

On 1st June de Gaulle replied that Clark no doubt understood his own business best. He did not comment on Anglo-American rivalry.

On the German side Hitler and his entourage and the senior commanders in Italy attached no strategic or tactical value to Rome except that its bridges would be useful if *AOK 14* and *AOK 10* were compelled to withdraw across the Tiber.[31] Hitler, as early as February 1944, had discussed the evacuation of Rome with Kesselring and had then directed that its Tiber bridges were not to be demolished. This order was repeated by *OKW's* Operations Branch on 3rd June, when the following signal was sent to Kesselring:

> 'Führer decision. There must not be a battle of Rome. If necessary, the Army Group must swing back far enough to the north-west to ensure that the city in no circumstances becomes a battlefield.'

---

* Colonel P. Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie*, (Ministère des Armées, Paris 1969), p. 125, 127.

Digitized by Google

His High Command's sanction to evacuate Rome 'should this become necessary' had been sought by Kesselring on 2nd June, on the grounds that it no longer seemed possible for *AOK 14* to reconstruct a connected front south of the Tiber. The tardiness of the request and of the reply could be ascribed to Hitler's notorious reluctance to let German troops abandon any territory which they had occupied, but Dr. Schramm, the *OKW* diarist for this period, indicates that political motives played their part. He states that the German High Command was very conscious of the boost which the liberation of Italy's capital would give to her countrymen, and to the Allied cause throughout Europe, at the start of their 'invasion summer'. Thus although a military defence of Rome was neither planned nor undertaken, in terms of propaganda and prestige it was a prize to be withheld for as long as possible.

(iv)

See Maps 11 *and* 16

Now, so many years later, we know how the battle for Rome ended, and therefore we can mark 26th May as the beginning of its final phase. But this distinction did not appear while the battle was being fought, and it is interesting therefore to bring together the terse comments which Alexander often made in his concise reports sent each evening to Sir Alan Brooke:*[32]

> 22nd May. 'The battle has now reached a critical stage. The three simultaneous attacks by the British, Americans, and French planned for . . . tomorrow morning will soon show how the operations are going to develop'.
>
> 23rd May. 'The pincer movement from Pontecorvo on one side and Anzio on the other appears to have been nicely timed, but I am not entirely satisfied with the speed of progress on both flanks. To gain a decisive victory a rapid break through on both sides is necessary, and we are out for the big prize in this battle'.
>
> 24th May. 'I am more satisfied with the speed and progress of operations today'.
>
> 26th May. 'I am well satisfied with the progress of operations'.
>
> 29th May. 'The fighting continues to be extremely hard and severe, but the troops are full of heart and I am confident of a successful outcome'.
>
> 31st May. 'Today has been one of important gains'.
>
> 3rd June. 'Situation on the battle front is going well with great possibilities'.

* These reports were addressed to the C.I.G.S. and repeated to the Prime Minister and General Wilson.

Digitized by Google

4th June. 'I do not think that there is much doubt but that we have got a fair cop'.

These extracts describe the situation as Alexander saw it at the time, and they form a commentary on the stories which remain for us to tell. Even in a general account these are many. They are the stories of 8th Army and its 13th, 1st Canadian, and 10th Corps; of 5th Army and its French, and 2nd, 4th, and 6th U.S. Corps; and of *AOK 10* and *14*, each of two Corps. The great Duke of Wellington once gave his views on the history of battles to the ever-inquisitive Mr. Croker, Secretary of the Admiralty, general busybody, and a founder-member of the Athenaeum. The Duke said 'some individuals may recollect all the little events of which the great result is the battle won or lost; but no individual can recollect the order in which, or the exact moment at which, they occurred, which makes all the difference to their value or importance'. However the historian at his desk can to some extent impose an order and time upon his chosen events. But because it is impossible to tell several stories simultaneously we shall present, from this point, the stories of the Allied armies in the order given above, and introduce from time to time short accounts of the actions of the higher German commanders. The general shape of the final phase of the battle for Rome is much simpler than its intricate details. 5th and 8th Armies continued their steady advance towards Rome; 5th Army along Highway 7 and by thrusts north and south of the Alban hills and through them: 8th Army along Highway 6 (until 31st May) and by lesser roads north and south of it. 8th Army advanced more slowly than 5th Army mainly because General Leese had decided that his armoured divisions must lead the way through country which was most unsuitable for them, and because of the clumsy staff-work in the headquarters of the Army, and of 13th and the Canadian Corps. On the German side *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* fulfilled the spirit of Hitler's directives by fighting very stubbornly a series of delaying actions, and in the case of *AOK 14* a defensive battle on and after 26th May. During this final phase of the battle for Rome the operations of 5th Army caused the Germans the sharpest anxiety, in particular those which fell upon the boundary between *AOK 14* and *AOK 10*.

Clark and Leese now developed their plans. Until 31st May Clark looked no further ahead than the capture of Rome but on that day taking the fall of the city for granted, he declared his intention 'to crush the Fourteenth German Army facing our Anzio forces and to exploit by all means every opportunity to destroy completely the enemy's forces and material'.[33]

Leese had issued an Operation Instruction to his corps commanders on 22nd May.[34] He intended:

Digitized by Google

'1. To break through the enemy defence line located approx Subiaco–Valmontone–Velletri.

2. To advance to the area Rieti–Terni.'

His immediate operations would be to advance to the line Genazzano –Valmontone in three phases. In the first phase 13th Corps and the Canadian Corps were bidden to gain the line Arce–Ceprano, an advance of about seven miles, and Highway 6 was given to 13th Corps as its axis of advance. In the second phase the objective was the area Frosinone–Ceccano, an advance of about sixteen miles. 13th Corps was to block the road Arce–Sora (Highway 82) at a point north of Arce, was to advance to Frosinone along Highway 6, and was to reconnoitre towards Sora with a view to operations in that direction also. The Canadian Corps was to advance to Ceccano on the axis Ceprano–Pofi, moving along bad by-roads and tracks south of Highway 6. The objective in the third phase was the line Genazzano–Valmontone. 13th Corps was to advance towards Genazzano on the axis Frosinone–Alatri–Acuto, thus moving by roads north of Highway 6. The corps was to be ready to move also along the road Guarcino–Subiaco. The Canadian Corps was to advance to Valmontone along Highway 6. During the three phases 10th Corps was to protect the right flank by blocking the following roads: Alfedena–Rivisondoli–Sulmona; Alfedena–Opi (Highway 83); and the approaches to Atina from S. Biagio and Belmonte. The Polish Corps was to move towards Piedimonte and, at farthest, to Castrocielo.

See Map 11

We must now look once more at *AOK 10's* affairs. We have already noticed (Chapter IV) von Vietinghoff's order, issued at 1.15 a.m. on 26th May, that 14th Panzer Corps and 51st Mountain Corps were to withdraw to the line Castro dei Volsci–Mt S. Cataldo (Pt 373)–Ceprano–Arce–Casalvieri–Scontrone. Earlier, on 24th May, von Vietinghoff had given pointers for further withdrawal by directing that his corps would follow certain wire and cable systems:

a. *For 14th Panzer Corps.* The networks which led to Tivoli via Valmontone–Palestrina. If this 'became impossible' the Corps would follow the systems which led to Tivoli via Fiuggi, or via Alatri–Subiaco.

b. *For 51st Mountain Corps.* The system which led to Borgocollefegato via Sora–Balsorano–Capistrello–Avezzano.[35]

AOK 10 did not therefore envisage Valmontone as an unavoidable bottleneck, for on the map five routes of withdrawal were available. They were Highway 6, and north of it the following:

Digitized by Google

The road Frosinone–Paliano–Genazzano
The road Frosinone–Alatri–Guarcino–Subiaco
The road Sora–Balsorano–Avezzano
The road Opi–Celano

In Chapter IV we gave some examples of the effect of air attacks on German communications, and we noted that by 28th May regimental commanders were employed on traffic control, as well as every military policeman in *AOK 10*.[36] The engineer Major-General Rothe and his staff were taken from their work in the Cäsar Line to co-ordinate the repair of roads, but it was almost impossible to find able-bodied civilians for this task as they had fled from their homes to avoid impressment. Information of the conditions of the roads became as important to German commanders as tactical information of the fighting.

Kesselring, von Vietinghoff and *AOK 10's* Corps Commanders, von Senger and Feuerstein, believed Valmontone to be a tactically important place and believed that if the Allies captured it, the right flank of *AOK 10* would be in serious danger.[37] Kesselring had the notion of creating a special force, including the Hermann Göring Panzer Division, to defend Valmontone but dismissed it when *OKW* ruled that this division must be reserved for a counter-attack. von Vietinghoff and his commanders were thinking also of deeper withdrawals than that which Kesselring had approved in the small hours of the 26th for *AOK 10*, namely the line Castro dei Volsci–Scontrone, mentioned above. Indeed on 25th May von Senger had proposed and von Vietinghoff had approved withdrawal to a line further north-west and north, running from Morolo railway station, due west of Frosinone, to Alvito. von Altenstadt, von Senger's Chief of Staff, contended that if 14th Panzer Corps and 51st Mountain Corps withdrew to this more distant line, they would be well placed to withdraw still further by the roads to Subiaco, and from Sora to Balsorano and Avezzano before the Allied air attacks closed them.

On 26th May *OKW* forbade this manoeuvre and von Altenstadt expressed a general opinion when he described the veto as a catastrophe attributable to *OKW's* ignorance of what was really happening in the field. The Corps Commanders also were upset because both had beaten the pistol by beginning the deeper withdrawals through intermediate lines in anticipation of sanction. von Senger had picked a line through Ripi, south-east of Frosinone. Feuerstein had sent 1st Parachute Division and 44th Infantry Division back to the line Colle Donate (Pt 203)–Mt Piccolo–Mt Inero–Belmonte, and had ordered 5th Mountain Division to withdraw during the night 26th/27th May to the line Mortale–S. Donato–Mt Irto, and 114th Jäger Division to the line Mt Irto–Barrea–Colle della Monna.

Digitized by Google

After *OKW's* veto, passed on by Kesselring, some troops were halted, some were not, and some as it were marked time.[38] Order, counter-order, disorder. Kesselring managed to remain 'brisk and bracing' although *OKW* had quashed manoeuvres which he had approved. von Vietinghoff on the contrary was glum and complained to Kesselring about the length of his front and about his L. of C. which was so vulnerable to air attack. When Kesselring reminded him that the Allies must be 'bled white with hard fighting', he retorted that to perform this operation he needed many more troops than he had. Kesselring assured him that he would receive reinforcements as soon as von Mackensen had restored *AOK 14's* situation. The assurance did not comfort von Vietinghoff who shared with his corps commanders a poor opinion of *AOK 14's* capabilities.[39]

Kesselring, in spite of his brisk and bracing air, was still uneasy about the vulnerable corridor which was formed by the boundary between the Armies. On 26th May he increased the area for which *AOK 10* was responsible by moving the boundary about six or seven miles westward to the line Monte S. Biago–Prossedi–Castellaccio.[40] At the same time he directed that any units of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division (*AOK 14*) which stood east of the new boundary should pass under command of 14th Panzer Corps. Kesselring's decision reduced the size of the 'appendix' for which *AOK 14* was responsible and eased von Mackensen's lot. On the other hand von Vietinghoff's responsibilities were increased, and the reinforcement which he obtained from 29th Panzer Grenadier Division was less than he hoped for because von Mackensen was allowed to keep two of its battalions and a battery.*

See Maps 10 *and* 16

In 13th Corps on 25th May 6th Armoured Division was to lead the advance, moving by a track which crossed the Forme d'Aquino near Ponte di Castelluccio, and then ran north-westward on the south side of the railway to the Melfa which it crossed at a point between the railway and Highway 6. At daybreak the Derbyshire Yeomanry Group led off, only to be stopped by a minefield on the west side of the Forme d'Aquino. 5th Canadian Armoured Division had previously discovered this obstacle but had omitted to pass on the information, and so 6th Armoured Division's engineers spent five hours in making gaps and the Derbyshire Yeomanry Group

* In the event 14th Panzer Corps received 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment and two batteries. *AOK 14* kept 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and the remainder of the division's artillery. These troops were ordered to Valmontone. Further reinforcements for *AOK 14* were sent to Artena (see p. 263–4).

Digitized by Google

did not cross the Melfa until nightfall. 78th Division, headed by 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, meanwhile advanced along Highway 6 until by nightfall the tanks reached Roccasecca railway station. On the right of 13th Corps 8th Indian Division moved by tracks which crossed the foothills of Mt Cairo and reached Castrocielo. The Indian Division's infantry were purposely very lightly equipped, were lifted in vehicles when possible, and when transport was impossible, took to their feet and marched hard through wild, broken hills and narrow winding valleys where the roads were little better than cart tracks.[41] Bulldozers moved well forward in every column, but animal transport was kept handy for cross-country moves. A diarist wrote 'After months of static warfare and monotony, we were thrusting northwards once more, elated by our victory and the enemy's collapse'.

By contrast with infantry divisions, armoured divisions were at a disadvantage neatly described by the historian of the 17th/21st Lancers who writes 'Fighting with an armoured division in Italy was like using a dagger to open a tin . . . '* The root of the trouble was of course the very large number of vehicles in the divisions at that time: in 1944 an armoured division's establishment was 366 tanks and 3,048 other vehicles, 3,414 in all, and an infantry division's establishment was 3,375 vehicles.†

The vehicles in an infantry division could for a time be reduced by two-thirds or more without very much affecting fighting power but the vehicles of an armoured division could not be reduced to the same extent. Even when reductions had been made in both kinds of division, the number of vehicles remaining demanded plenty of roads, and good 'going' off the roads. Italy did not provide these conditions. Good roads were scarce and, though they were often marvels of engineering, they were not well suited to military use because for miles at a time they might be bounded by walls or ditches or cut '*en corniche*' across steep slopes. Good 'going' off the roads was unusual. In such conditions, accidents and breaches of march-discipline, to say nothing of the enemy's demolitions, could cause immense traffic jams to form. A diarist, in a unit which was approaching the Melfa in the wake of several others, wrote: 'In the first hour we advanced half a mile . . . and so it went on all day . . . After four hours we had done three miles . . . '.[43] Many other witnesses tell the same story.

---

* R. L. V. ffrench-Blake: *A History of the 17th/21st Lancers 1922–1959*, (London 1962), p. 153. The regiment belonged to 26th Armoured Brigade of 6th Armoured Division.

† These figures are approximate because establishments changed from time to time and often were not complete.[42] According to the official war establishment the 366 tanks of an armoured division numbered: 246 cruiser, 27 A.A., 63 light, 27 O.P., 3 bridgelayer.

Digitized by Google

On 26th May the Derbyshire Yeomanry Group advanced to the defile through which Highway 6 passes between Mt Orio and Mt Piccolo (Pt 321) to Arce about two miles distant.[44] Here they were stopped by a rear-guard from 1st Parachute Division and by shelling. Behind them 3rd Grenadier Guards and 16th/5th Lancers advanced slowly because the wooded country on both sides of the road was dotted with small German posts which had been bypassed and which had to be subdued. By nightfall the Grenadier Guards were about two and a half miles behind the Derbyshire Yeomanry Group. On the right 19th Indian Infantry Brigade passed through Roccasecca during the forenoon and found a ford and a light, but undamaged, bridge over the Melfa at Ponte Vecchio. A small column set out towards Casalvieri but was held up by a broken bridge about two and a half miles north of Roccasecca. The German opposition came from rear-guards, as usual well handled, because, as we have seen, 51st Mountain Corps was withdrawing 90th Panzer Grenadier Division to Ceprano, and 1st Parachute Division to the neighbourhood of Arce where it was extending its left to make touch with 44th Infantry Division near S. Padre.

During the night 26th/27th May 3rd Battalion Welsh Guards and 2nd Lothians and Border Horse joined forces with the Grenadier Guards and 16th/5th Lancers, and during 27th and 28th May the whole 1st Guards Brigade—for 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards also had come forward—tried to drive the German parachutists from Mt Orio, Mt Piccolo, and Mt Grande. The parachutists fought like wild cats on these six hundred foot, rocky hills and even when they had been driven off all but the western part of Mt Grande put in three or four counter-attacks against the Coldstream and Grenadier Guards.* At length the parachutists withdrew during the night 28th/29th May. Their withdrawal was partly caused by an outflanking move by 17th Indian Infantry Brigade on the right of the Guards Brigade. On 27th May the Indian Brigade's 1st Royal Fusiliers cleared Mt Orio, and then 1st/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles dislodged a detachment of 132nd Grenadier Regiment (44th Infantry Division) from Frajoli. On 28th May 1st Battalion, 12th Frontier Force Regiment and tanks of 18th New Zealand Armoured Regiment cleared Mt Favone and on 29th May the Gurkhas and 2nd Lothians entered Arce. On the left of 13th Corps its 78th Division was moving towards Ceprano, as was 5th Canadian

---

* Casualties in 1st Guards Brigade amounted to:[45]

3rd Grenadier Guards	76
2nd Coldstream Guards	66
3rd Welsh Guards	112
	254

Digitized by Google

Armoured Division; movements shortly to be described. *AOK 10* was now combining delaying action with retreat in obedience to Kesselring's most recent directives. On 27th May he passed on to von Mackensen and von Vietinghoff an order from Hitler that the Cäsar Line was to be defended '*à outrance*'.[46] On the 28th he declared that his task was to defend 'central Italy and also Rome' and that he would not allow *AOK 14* and *AOK 10* to move to the Cäsar Line 'soon'. Nevertheless he authorised von Vietinghoff to withdraw his right flank to the line Roccasecca dei Volsci (near Priverno)–Ceccano–Strangolagalli–Arce (*see Map 11*), perhaps a concession to the views of von Vietinghoff, von Senger and Feuerstein. With an eye to future withdrawals he drew a new and longer boundary between *AOK 14* and *AOK 10*, to have effect from 29th May. This was the line Monte S. Biagio–Prossedi–Mt Ermo (Mt Favetozzo on British maps)–Sgurgola–Anagni. This boundary left Highway 6 in *AOK 10's* territory as far northwards as a line roughly from Sgurgola to Anagni. Beyond that line the important road passed into the hands of *AOK 14*, and so if *AOK 10* had later to make a long retreat it would have to move along roads north of Highway 6. Therefore von Vietinghoff and his corps commanders worried less than before about what might happen if the Allies cut Highway 6 at Valmontone. But Kesselring nevertheless believed that Valmontone was still a danger point, and he ordered von Mackensen to plan counter-attacks in that area, using his 76th Panzer Corps.

While 6th Armoured Division was breaking through the German delaying positions between Colle Donate (Pt 203) and Mt Inero (Pt 637), 78th Division (also of 13th Corps) should have been advancing to Ceprano along Highway 6.[47] But west of the Melfa this road was crammed with the vehicles of 6th Armoured Division and of Canadian and other units. General Keightley could do no more than send 38th Infantry Brigade across country along tracks which ran on the south side of the Highway—which here describes the shape of a huge inverted letter U with its arch at Arce—towards Ceprano. 38th Infantry Brigade was a mile short of Ceprano by nightfall, but the remainder of the 78th Division had to halt until 29th May.*

We now return to the Canadian Corps on the left of 13th Corps. The task of the Canadians was to advance to Ceccano through the country south of Highway 6.[48] The 'going' in this country was far from easy, and there were two awkward water obstacles. The Upper

* During this pause 9th Armoured Brigade replaced 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade as the armour attached to 78th Division. The main units of 9th Armoured Brigade (Brigadier M. G. Roddick) were 3rd Hussars, Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, Warwickshire Yeomanry. Its tanks were Sherman III. The brigade remained with 78th Division from 26th May until 30th June 1944, when it passed to 10th Corps.

Digitized by Google

Liri river flows down from the north, past Arce and Ceprano, and near Isoletta is joined by the River Sacco which flows from the west through a valley. The mingled rivers then flow towards the south-east, and are called simply the Liri. At Isoletta a large reservoir had been made which was about a mile long north to south and five hundred yards across east to west. A force which advances from east to west, as did the Canadians, must cross the Upper Liri and must find a way round the Isoletta Reservoir.

Early on 26th May General Burns ordered his Corps to exploit quickly along the axis Ceprano–Pofi–Frosinone with 5th Canadian Armoured Division on the right and 1st Canadian Division on the left. The first objective was the north-south road between Ceprano and Ceprano railway station. 1st Canadian Division would halt on this objective, and 5th Canadian Armoured Division would go onwards alone to the second objective, a north-south road between Pofi and the railway line.

Hoffmeister, commanding 5th Canadian Armoured Division, ordered Snow's 11th Infantry Brigade to lead the division and this brigade set off from the Melfa at 7 a.m. on 26th May. The Cape Breton Highlanders were on the right, and the Perth Regiment was on the left, each supported by a squadron of the New Brunswick Hussars (5th Armoured Brigade). In the words of the Canadian official historian:

> 'Progress was slow. The difficulties of negotiating the rough and narrow tracks through the thick bush were aggravated by the presence of numerous mines and booby traps, and it was necessary to build several diversions for tanks and vehicles. There was continuous mortaring and shelling over the area . . . snipers maintained troublesome fire. These conditions might have presented no serious problem to seasoned troops, but the two battalions . . . allowed their advance to be delayed unnecessarily.'

They were not to blame, because experience alone gives troops the know-how to disregard scattered enemies, leaving them to be mopped up by someone else, or to straggle off into hiding and ultimate captivity. By nightfall on 26th May the brigade reached the east bank of the Upper Liri and patrols discovered that the bridges had been demolished. Some men swam the river and reported that there were no Germans in Ceprano.

On 1st Canadian Division's front Adams Force moved along the north bank of the main Liri river and reached the Isoletta Reservoir without opposition.[49] The reason was that troops of 3rd Algerian Division had already occupied S. Giovanni Incarico on the south side of the river and enemy detachments on the north bank had withdrawn upon being outflanked. The bridge over the Liri had been

Digitized by Google

destroyed but a Canadian patrol managed to cross, and then went on round the south end of the reservoir and across the Sacco river to Ceprano railway station. This was the southern end of the Canadians' first objective. The best route for a further advance seemed to be that which the patrol had taken. The Canadian engineers bridged the Liri east of the Reservoir during the night 26th/27th May but were unable to bridge the Sacco until 4.30 a.m. on the 28th because bringing large lorries of bridging material across bad 'going' was slow work. The delay was not important because 1st Canadian Division stood fast on the first objective as Burns had ordered.

On 27th May 5th Canadian Armoured Division began its advance to Pofi, situated on the Canadians' second objective. 11th (Canadian) Infantry Brigade again led but the crossing of the Upper Liri by boat proved to be terribly slow. This was because the German artillery, firing from positions west of Ceprano, forced the infantry to cross at a place which was in cover but where there was room to work one boat only. It was midnight 27th/28th May before the brigade secured the road between Ceprano and Ceprano railway station. During this night the Canadian engineers, working in great haste, bridged the Upper Liri, but alas the bridge collapsed and was not rebuilt until 5.30 p.m. on the 28th May. As a result of these misfortunes the Canadians were almost at a standstill during 27th and 28th May. The two days' delay gave a useful respite to the German force which was withdrawing before the Canadians in the retirement, sanctioned by Kesselring, to the line Roccasecca dei Volsci–Ceccano–Strangolagalli–Arce. This force was composed mainly of the remains of 26th Panzer Division (von Lüttwitz) that is to say part of 26th Panzer Regiment and handfuls of 9th and 67th Panzer Grenadier Regiments, to which were added a battalion of 1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and other miscellaneous units.

Because Leese had given Highway 6 to 13th Corps as the axis of its advance to Frosinone he gave that Corps first use of the Canadian bridge over the Upper Liri, and so during the night 28th/29th May 78th Division began to cross (in the order 36th Infantry Brigade, 38th Infantry Brigade, 9th Armoured Brigade, 11th Infantry Brigade), heading for Frosinone in a two-pronged thrust, one prong through Strangolagalli, the other through Ripi.[51] 5th Canadian Armoured Division had to advance through the Sacco valley south of Highway 6, as Burns had ordered.

The ground in the Sacco valley proved to be worse than had been expected. Sharp, thickly-wooded ridges, often separated by troublesome streams, crossed the line of advance, and the Fornelli and Meringo streams had to be bridged at a cost of much delay. Now and then German self-propelled guns sniped at the Canadian tanks.

Digitized by Google

The Canadian force became jumbled up as units and parts of units searched for reasonable 'going', forging ahead if they found it, sticking fast if they did not. The two leading squadrons of the British Columbia Dragoons approaching Pofi at 7 p.m. on the 29th with nine tanks left. Their diarist writes, 'Of the remainder, five had been destroyed by enemy action and the rest were bogged down, stuck on banks, rocks, tree stumps . . . '[52] A company of the Westminsters, which had found better going, reached Pofi by 9 a.m. but was withdrawn for safety from an imminent Allied air strike against the town. The Westminsters' general fortunes were thus described by a diarist, 'Bits and pieces of the Regiment were all over the countryside, numerous vehicles being suspended over cliffs or jammed in sunken roads'[53]. Nevertheless in spite of the troubles of the day the Canadians occupied Pofi after dark on 29th May. Their toilsome, sweat-soaked struggle was not at all like the grandiose vision seen by the Prime Minister on 28th May of twelve hundred or so tanks 'used and indeed used up in making a scythe movement cutting off the enemy's retreat'.[54]

On 28th May Burns had seen the armoured division's slow progress through country which was revealing itself as most unsuitable for tanks. He decided to bring forward 1st Canadian Division because infantry might be able to move faster than armour. Nevertheless the armoured division continued to advance on the 30th to gain what ground it could before the infantry came up. By nightfall on the 30th the 5th Canadian Armoured Division had passed through Arnara and had reached a line roughly from S. Antonio to Ceccano. The only noticeable engagement was a clash between Lord Strathcona's Horse and a detachment of 26th Panzer Division near S. Antonio. The German rear-guards were in fact withdrawing to positions west of Frosinone. On the evening of the 30th, 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade relieved its armoured brethren, and on the 31st advanced to Frosinone, expelling from the town a battalion of 134th Grenadier Regiment and a few Panther tanks. 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade came up during the day and so by nightfall on the 31st Vokes' Division was 'overlooking the rolling plain that stretched towards Rome'.[55] This unfortunate changing of horses at the wrong moment did not improve 8th Army's speed of advance.

We must leave the Canadians in Frosinone and return to 13th Corps on 29th May as it continued to advance, with 78th Division gradually inclining to the right into the rough country north of Highway 6. We need not follow the laborious movements in detail. The Germans had established a rhythm of nightly withdrawals from one delaying position to another. They mined and booby-trapped the roads

Digitized by Google

and their verges, and many of the buildings which clustered in hamlets or stood solitary by the way. They demolished and booby-trapped bridges and culverts. Their guns and mortars at long ranges brought down observed fire upon their pursuers. When the ground was suitable small detachments of infantry and one or two self-propelled guns would resist firmly for as long as was needed to force the pursuers to halt and deploy for small attacks. Against these classic tactics for rear-guards, the leading troops of 13th Corps conducted a stern chase, for ever lifting mines, making diversions round demolitions, crossing gullies and streams, unditching tanks, pushing through vineyards and groves of olives and across terraced fields, launching attacks which usually hit air. It is a maddeningly slow form of war for troops who are advancing and offers small returns for sustained hard labour and daily casualties. If the troops who are withdrawing know their jobs and keep their heads, as the Germans did, they enjoy many advantages, and small detachments can impose long delays. By the evening of 31st May, in 78th Division, 38th Infantry Brigade on the right and 36th Infantry Brigade on the left were overlooking the Frosinone–Sora road between, right to left, Madonna del Giglio and Castel Massimo.[56] 11th Infantry Brigade was coming up behind them through Ripi and Torrice. On the same day 19th Indian Infantry Brigade, leading 8th Indian Division, expelled rear-guards of 1st Parachute Division from the hilltop town of Monte S. Giovanni and from Colle Lucinetta, and reached points about two miles from the Frosinone–Sora road, and the same distance from Castelliri.

From the beginning of the Allies' offensive McCreery's 10th Corps had been guarding 8th Army's right flank and watching and containing the following German formations (in order from east to west): 114th Jäger Division (Boelsen), 5th Mountain Division (Schrank), and part of 44th Infantry Division (Ortner).*[57] The Italian Corps of Liberation stood on the right of 10th Corps; the New Zealand Division on the left, and when the time came to advance, McCreery intended to send forward these two formations.†

---

* Major-General Bourquin, commanding 114th Jäger Division, had been wounded on 11th May, and Major-General Boelsen then took over the Division.

† a. *Italian Corps of Liberation* (*C.I.L.*) (General Umberto Utili):
Main units: 4th Bersaglieri Regiment (two battalions);
68th Infantry Regiment (two battalions); 185th Parachute Battalion; Piedmont Alpini Battalion; 11th Artillery Regiment.[56]

b. *2nd New Zealand Division* (Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg)
Main formations and units: *4th Armoured Brigade* (Brigadier L. M. Inglis): 18th, 19th, 20th Armoured Regiments, 22nd Motor Battalion.
5th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier K. Stewart): 21st, 23rd, 28th (Maori) Battalions.
6th Infantry Brigade (Brigadier G. B. Parkinson): 24th, 25th, 26th Battalions.
Armoured Cars: Divisional Cavalry Regiment.

Continued over page

Digitized by Google

Meanwhile the Italians' front lay between Rionero and Costa S. Pietro; the New Zealanders' between Costa S. Pietro and Colle Abate (Pt 915). 114th Jäger Division broadly speaking, faced the Italians. From right to left of the New Zealand Division the German dispositions were:

85th Mountain Regiment: S. Biago to Mt Cifalco
100th Mountain Regiment: Mt Cifalco
134th Grenadier Regiment: Belmonte
132nd Grenadier Regiment: Terelle *

By 22nd May McCreery had decided that when he was ordered to advance the *C.I.L.* would move towards Opi on Highway 83 by way of Mt Cavallo and Valle di Canneto.[60] The New Zealand Division's infantry would push forward to Atina to begin with. On 26th May 10th Corps' advance began, and it happened that at 4 a.m. on that day Feuerstein ordered 44th Infantry Division and 5th Mountain Division to withdraw to the north side of the River Melfa in order to conform to the withdrawals of 1st Parachute Division and 90th Panzer Grenadier Division on the right of 51st Mountain Corps. By a misunderstanding 114th Jäger Division withdrew also.

The *C.I.L.* therefore met little opposition at first but on 27th May had a sharp action at Mt Cavallo, and another at Mt Mattone on the 28th. On the 29th the Italian force reached Colle Camosciara, south-east of Opi.[61] Here it halted in accordance with a regrouping ordered by Alexander on 26th May, in which the *C.I.L.* was to move to the east coast. Pursuit of the Germans on Highway 83 (Opi–Celano) was given up.

On the New Zealand Division's front signs of the German withdrawal had been accumulating, and 21st New Zealand Battalion entered Terelle at dawn on the 26th. Freyberg had ordered 5th Infantry Brigade to push on to Belmonte and Atina 'without getting into too much trouble'.[62] 6th Infantry Brigade was to clear the road from S. Biagio to Atina. 'Whoever (5 or 6 Brigade) gets to Atina first, will go on to Sora. The other Brigade will follow. Don't get involved but keep the enemy on the run'. Freyberg wished to avoid heavy engagements with a retreating enemy and casualties which might be high, because as G.O.C. 2nd New Zealand Expedi-

---

continued

Artillery: 4th, 5th, 6th Field Regiments, 7th A/Tk Regiment, 14th L.A.A. Regiment.
Engineers: 6th, 7th, 8th Field Companies, 5th Field Park Company.
M.G.: 27th (M.G.) Battalion.

c. *10th Corps Artillery*
Main units: 2nd A.G.R.A.: 5th, 74th, 102nd, 140th Medium Regiments R.A.; 56th Heavy Regiment R.A.; one battery 32nd Heavy Regiment R.A.[59]

* On or about 22nd May Ortner and H.Q. 44th Infantry Division resumed command of 134th Grenadier Regiment (from attachment to 5th Mountain Division) and 132nd Grenadier Regiment (from attachment to 1st Parachute Division).

Digitized by Google

tionary Force his duty was to husband whenever possible the lives which were so large a part of New Zealand's manpower.

In fact the opposition put up by the rear parties of the German rear-guards was light, but there were very many large and difficult demolitions to be mended and mines and booby traps to be cleared.[63] By the early afternoon of 27th May 5th Infantry Brigade reached Atina and sent 21st and 23rd Battalions onward to the Melfa. Needless to say that the bridges had been destroyed. 6th Infantry Brigade struggled round and over never-ending demolitions and reached S. Biagio. It therefore fell to 5th Infantry Brigade to advance on the axis Atina–Sora on 28th May. By this time the effects of removing units from the left wing of 51st Mountain Corps to reinforce its right wing and 14th Panzer Corps as well were beginning to be felt by the German commanders. The rear-guard on Highway 82 was composed of 132nd Grenadier Regiment, a battalion of 134th Grenadier Regiment, a battery, and a battalion of engineers.[64] The diarist of 51st Mountain Corps wrote gloomily that 'The pulling out of one unit after another from 44th Division, 5th Mountain Division and 114th Jäger Division had stretched the rubber band to its utmost, so that it was in grave danger of breaking . . . '

On 28th May the New Zealand engineers laboured to bridge the Melfa and to pave fords. During the afternoon 5th Infantry Brigade advanced towards Vicalvi and Alvito against light opposition and long-range shelling. Early on 29th May 21st New Zealand Battalion entered Alvito, and a company captured Mt Morrone but was driven off it by a counter-attack during the afternoon. Meanwhile the rest of the battalion occupied Vicalvi. Brigadier Stewart now left 21st New Zealand Battalion to hold the line Vicalvi–Alvito and bypassed Mt Morrone, leaving the German company there to fall in due course like a rotten pear from its stalk.[65] 28th (Maori) Battalion led on, directed upon Colle Mastroianni and, on the north side of the River Fibreno, Colle Monacesco (Pt 572). By dawn on the 30th the Maoris were approaching the Fibreno which they crossed by ferrying in a 'country' boat. The battalion then took Colle Monacesco and Brocco. Meanwhile the engineers had begun to bridge the Fibreno under fire from machine guns and mortars, but these were withdrawn as the Maori Battalion made ground, and the engineers continued their bridging to finish it at 11 a.m. on 31st May. 5th Infantry Brigade's next objective was Sora and Pescosolido. Sora was occupied on 31st May: Pescosolido on 1st June.

See Map 11

On 28th May Kesselring issued orders to *AOK 10* and *AOK 14*, and on the 29th he sent a report on the state of his armies to Jodl

Digitized by Google

and to *OKH.*[66] His directive of the 28th (which defined his own task as *OB Südwest* as the 'continued defence of central Italy and also Rome') began with the encouraging statement that the Allies had achieved their powerful concentration on the west coast of Italy only by stripping the other fronts bare and by committing all their reserves. *AOK 14* had three tasks: to get the upper hand at Valmontone, to hold the Cäsar Line from Torre Vaianica on the coast to Lanuvio, Velletri, and Labico on Highway 6, and to make stronger the (so-called) Campagna switch-line which ran from a point on the Rome–Ostia road-Lake Albano–Rocca di Papa–Rocca Priora–Cave. *AOK 10's* task was to prevent the Allies from striking up the Sacco valley towards Rome although von Vietinghoff, with Kesselring's approval, might withdraw, fighting step by step, about ten miles to the line Mt Nero–Ferentino–Caporilli–S. Donato–Barrea. *AOK 10* would then offer 'decisive resistance' on this line, thereby gaining time for the strengthening of the defences in its sector of the Cäsar Line.

Kesselring's report on the state of his armies was his first since 12th May.[67] He said that the condition of both armies had changed very much for the worse from their very satisfactory condition on 1st May. The troops were showing great bravery and steadfastness in the face of the Allies' vast superiority in material and domination in the air, but the strain was beginning to tell. He reckoned that 25,000 men were 'out of action' although accurate returns of casualties had not yet been made.*

A very large amount of equipment also was 'out of action'.† Overwork, air attacks, and long journeys over bad roads had greatly reduced the number of motor vehicles, and spare parts and tyres were very scarce. The Allies too must have suffered heavy losses but Kesselring expected them to keep up the offensive until they had taken Rome. If Army Group C had to offer prolonged defence it must be largely reinforced and he asked for 15 *marsch* battalions,

---

* Kesselring used the general word *Ausfall* (literally a 'falling out') and not the specific word *Verlust* meaning 'loss'.

† 20,000 of the men 'out of action' were accounted for as follows (approximates):

71st Infantry Division	5,000
29th Panzer Grenadier Division 94th Infantry Division 90th Panzer Grenadier Division	each 3,000
1st Parachute Division 5th Mountain Division	each 2,000
362nd Infantry Division 715th Infantry Division	each 1,500 from strengths much below war establishments

'Out of action' equipment amounted to:

Machine guns	2,500
Medium anti-tank guns	420
Field and Infantry guns	295
Nebelwerfer	54
Tanks	148

Digitized by Google

two fresh and battle-hardened divisions to replace 94th and 715th Infantry Divisions, and as large numbers as possible of machine guns, anti-tank guns and assault guns. We have seen that these requests did not go unheeded, and later in this chapter we describe the orders which Kesselring received from *OKW* at the beginning of June.

(v)

The battle for Rome reached its climax in the fighting between 6th and 2nd U.S. Corps and *AOK 14* on a battlefield which lay between a general line (north to south) Valmontone–Velletri–Campoleone station and the eastern outskirts of Rome. By contrast the operations of 8th Army and 5th Army's French Expeditionary Corps were unspectacular because they consisted simply in following German formations, mostly belonging to *AOK 10*, which steadily withdrew north-westwards and became more and more fragmented in trying to escape by roads and tracks which seemed likely to be free, if only for a few hours, from the swarming and deadly Allied aircraft. It is convenient now to dispose of these valuable but pedestrian operations, remembering none the less that even in the dullest 'Death hath so many doors to let out life'.

The withdrawal of 14th Panzer and 51st Mountain Corps to *AOK 10's* sector of the Cäsar Line was governed to begin with by Kesselring's stipulation of 29th May that this Army was first to offer 'decisive resistance' on the line Mt Nero–Ferentino–Barrea.[68] On 29th May von Vietinghoff accordingly laid down intermediate lines to which his two Corps would withdraw. These were, west to east, for 14th Panzer Corps Mt Caccume (west of Ceccano)–Frosinone–Monte S. Giovanni–Castelliri; and for 51st Mountain Corps Castelliri–Telugno–Mt Capraro–Scontrone.[69] von Vietinghoff's line for 51st Mountain Corps from Telugno to Scontrone was almost the same as Kesselring's line from S. Donato to Barrea. As before the main danger points for *AOK 10's* manoeuvre were the points of contact between the right of von Senger's 14th Panzer Corps and the left of Herr's 76th Panzer Corps (*AOK 14*). By this time von Mackensen had more on his mind than the preservation of a connected front to *AOK 10*, as Herr was struggling to drive the Americans back from Valmontone and 1st Parachute Corps was preparing to withdraw into the Cäsar Line. However at midnight on 28th May von Mackensen authorised 29th Panzer Grenadier Division to retreat to the line Semprevisa–Mt Acuto to keep in step with 14th Panzer Corps, and it was agreed that 76th and 14th Panzer Corps would interlock at Mt Acuto and Mt Caccume.

Digitized by Google

The German commanders since 19th May roughly speaking, had expected trouble at the points of contact between 76th Panzer Corps and 14th Panzer Corps. Trouble arrived in the shape of the French Expeditionary Corps which after the capture of Pico on 22nd May continued to advance rapidly north-westwards, along the spine of the Lepini mountains and in the valley on the south side of the River Sacco. Juin suggested to Clark on 28th May that the French Expeditionary Corps should follow the axis Prossedi–Gavignano–Tivoli and Clark agreed.[70] However Alexander directed that for the present the French Expeditionary Corps must not cross the Sacco. He wished 8th Army to have undisturbed use of Highway 6 as far as a point level with Anagni. When 8th Army had reached that point it would continue its advance on the north side of Highway 6 and the French could then have that road. Juin therefore decided to use 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division and 1st French Infantry Division in the Sacco valley and the Mountain Corps in the Lepini mountains, moving north-westwards. So quickly did the French move that the ink on the German orders had scarcely dried before 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division on 30th May turned German rear-guards out of Ceccano and Osteria Palombara, and then advanced through Tomacella towards Supino. (*Map 16*) The Mountain Corps reached the outskirts of Carpineto on the same day. The French in fact went through the Semprevisa–Mt Acuto line and the Mt Caccume–Frosinone line like the proverbial hot knife through butter.

Kesselring now insisted that 76th Panzer Corps must restore the situation by recapturing Mt Pilocco north-east of Carpineto.[71] von Mackensen protested that he could not at once find the necessary troops, but, hard driven by Kesselring, he scraped up four battalions. These were 2nd Battalion 8th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division) and 1st Battalion 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 29th Panzer Grenadier Division) at Gorga, and at Gavignano 2nd Battalion 755th Grenadier Regiment (from 334th Infantry Division) and 1st Battalion 1059th Grenadier Regiment (from 92nd Infantry Division). This force attacked at 5 a.m. on 31st May and reached a standstill by 9 a.m. The French pushed on, undeterred; 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division to the outskirts of Morolo, the Mountain Corps towards Montelanico. Juin was heading for the northern and north-western slopes of the Lepini mountains and he intended to link with 6th U.S. Corps near Artena. Faced with this threat, Herr directed that one of the tasks of 76th Panzer Corps was to prevent the enemy from cutting in behind the right flank of 14th Panzer Corps. He therefore declared that the high ground near Gorga was vitally important and that at all costs contact with 14th Panzer Corps must be secured in the area

Digitized by Google

of Mt Ermo. Meanwhile von Senger on his own initiative had sent the remnant of 15th Panzer Grenadier Division back to a position north of Sgurgola to ward off any blow which the French might aim at the right rear of his Corps. von Vietinghoff and Kesselring approved this move and were satisfied also with the resistance which the rest of 14th Panzer Corps was putting up against the Canadians and 13th Corps at, and east of, Frosinone. They did not believe that decisive damage could be inflicted on the enemy in this sector but were pleased with any breathing space which was gained by delaying him. Nevertheless it was agreed that von Senger should withdraw during the night 30th/31st May to the line Mt Ermo–Morolo–Frosinone airfield–S. Angelo–Castelliri. This however was simply an intermediate line, for von Senger told his divisions that once it was reached they could prospect for new positions pivoting on Ferentino. This line was nearly the same as a part of the line which Kesselring, on 29th May, had laid down for *AOK 10*. On 1st June 29th Panzer Grenadier Division and various units attached were transferred from 76th Panzer Corps to 14th Panzer Corps in the hope that von Senger would then be better able to co-ordinate operations on his troublesome right flank, in other words on the inter-Army boundary. In place of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division Herr was to receive 334th Infantry Division, but such units of this formation as had reached the battlefield were already widely scattered. To defend his left flank Herr was therefore left with oddments from 715th Infantry Division, a few batteries, and part of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division. The new organisation was probably the result of events on 31st May. On this day the Canadians entered Frosinone and, as we have noticed, the French were on the outskirts of Morolo and were advancing from Carpineto towards Montelanico. According to German information 15th Panzer Grenadier Division was closely engaged all day on Mt Ermo while near Morolo parts of 305th Infantry Division's positions had been penetrated between Madonna del Piano on the Sacco and Ferentino railway station.[72] Here 26th Panzer Division restored the situation but nevertheless 14th Panzer Corps' line needed adjustment and during the night 31st May/1st June was settled as Mt Ermo–Ferentino–south of Alatri–Veroli–Belisario.

On 1st June the French Expeditionary Corps took possession of Morolo and advanced to within a few hundred yards of Montelanico, curiously without much worrying the German higher commanders.[73] Their attention now turned to the attacks which 5th Army's 2nd and 6th U.S. Corps were launching against the front between Valmontone and Velletri rather than to the French troops' rapid moves and 8th Army's muscle-bound advance. Nevertheless something had to be done to mend matters on *AOK 10's* right flank and

Digitized by Google

Kesselring and von Vietinghoff decided to try to concentrate 90th Panzer Grenadier Division, 1st Parachute Division, 305th Infantry Division, and 94th Infantry Division in the area Piglio–Paliano, north-east of Valmontone, during the next two or three days. Unfortunately these so-called divisions were very weak, and most of them were embroiled with the enemy. For the moment von Senger ordered 15th and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, 26th Panzer Division, 94th Infantry Division and 1st Parachute Division, to occupy the line Colleferro–Anagni–Collepardo. Rear-guards were to delay the enemy as long as possible between Segni and Gavignano, at Ferentino, and at Alatri.

Meanwhile what had been happening to 51st Mountain Corps? The higher German commanders had paid Feuerstein and his troops very little attention in comparison with the amount which they had given to 14th Panzer Corps.[74] One reason was that Feuerstein had many fewer troops than von Senger: on 29th May 14th Panzer Corps took command of 1st Parachute Division and on the 30th Feuerstein declared that each of the three divisions now remaining to him was no more than the equivalent of a regiment and he called them 'Blocking Groups' (*Sperrgruppen*). 44th Infantry Division became Ortner Group, 5th Mountain Division Schrank Group, and 114th Jäger Division Boelsen Group. Another reason was that the very mountainous country restricted operations to the Sora valley (Highway 82) and the road from Opi to Celano (Highway 83). In these areas which restricted manoeuvres the advantage lay with the defence which should therefore be able to give a good account of itself. Kesselring and von Vietinghoff told Feuerstein that he must at any cost prevent the enemy from breaking into the Sora valley, and then seem to have left him to do his best.[75] As we have already seen, the Italian Corps of Liberation by the end of May pushed Boelsen Group (114th Jäger Division) northwards to the line Montagnola–Mt Tartaro and Schrank Group (5th Mountain Division) from Mt Irto to Colle Camosciara (Pt 2060). The Italian Corps then halted, and 8th Army undertook no further operations along Highway 83 to save transport and bridging. Because of the Italian operations, however, Schrank was unable to help Ortner Group (44th Infantry Division) in opposing the New Zealand Division's advance on Sora. The New Zealanders captured Sora on 31st May, and Ortner retreated to a delaying position at Amanti. Feuerstein then decided that his next defensive line would be at Balsorano. A scare now occurred in 51st Mountain Corps. Towards evening on 1st June a detachment, sixty-one strong, of 6th (British) Parachute Battalion dropped near Toricelle, south of the Conca del Fucino, with the intention of causing havoc in rear of 51st Mountain Corps and preventing the destruction of bridges. The Germans

Digitized by Google

however had got wind of this plan from an intercepted wireless message and Colonel von Grundherr, commander of 51st Mountain Corps' artillery, quickly took charge of an improvised force and rounded up about half the parachutists in four days.*[76]

Ortner Group now occupied a delaying position at Collepiano, two miles south of Balsorano, and 24th and 21st New Zealand Battalions followed slowly and made contact on 2nd June.[77] During the night 2nd/3rd June Ortner Group began to withdraw, leaving a rear-guard behind it. Feuerstein now intended to withdraw through four intermediate lines to the Cäsar Line so that by 8th June his defensive positions would be:

Ortner Group	Tagliacozzo
Schrank Group	Avezzano–Celano
Boelsen Group	Castelvecchio–Popoli[78]

On 6th June the New Zealand Division was ordered to advance to Avezzano but for it, as for 51st Mountain Corps, the battle for Rome had ended.[79]

See also Map 16

The foregoing pages have given an outline of events on the fronts of the French Expeditionary Corps, and generally of 8th Army, mostly from the German point of view and have run ahead of the detailed operations of 8th Army's Canadian Corps and 13th Corps.

By 31st May 8th Army was ready to begin the third stage of the operations which Leese had ordered on 22nd May. This was to advance to the area Genazzano–Valmontone.[80] Leese had intended to use two Corps: 13th Corps along the axis Frosinone–Alatri–Acuto to Genazzano, and the Canadian Corps along Highway 6 to Valmontone. However on 28th or 29th May (for the date is not recorded) Leese gave his corps commanders verbal orders which altered his orders of 22nd May.†[81]

First he gave instructions 'To break the Valmontone Line and advance on Rome' in co-operation with 5th Army, but this plan need not detain us because 5th Army accomplished both objects by itself as Leese had expected. He therefore had provided for an 'advance North to seize the area Rieti–Terni'. An extract from Operation Instruction No. 1423 gives his plan:

---

* The parachutists who escaped capture found their way to the New Zealand Division.

† Leese confirmed his verbal orders by Operation Instruction No. 1423 issued on 3rd June. But it is clear from Corps' records that Corps commanders knew the gist of Operation Instruction No. 1423 as early as 28th or 29th May, which suggests that Leese gave his verbal orders on one or other of these dates.

Digitized by Google

'9. The Eighth Army advance will be carried out with 10 Corps right, and 13 Corps left.

10. *10 Corps.* To secure the Avezzano area and continue their advance on either Aquila or Rieti according to the development of operations.

11. *13 Corps.* To advance to the area Rieti–Terni by developing thrusts from the general line Arsoli–excl. Rome.

12. *1 Cdn Corps.* Will be withdrawn from operations into Army Reserve . . .'

8th Army was to be regrouped for the advance to Rieti and Terni but for the time being we need notice only the following changes. 4th (British) Division from Army Reserve joined 13th Corps between 1st and 6th June, and the greater part of the Division concentrated near Ceprano on 4th June.[82] 61st Infantry Brigade (Brigadier A. C. Gore) joined 6th Armoured on 29th May to augment the Division's infantry.* 6th South African Armoured Division from Army Reserve was placed under command of the Canadian Corps on 28th May.[83] The division had concentrated near Caserta on 24th May, where its infantry was increased by the addition of 24th Guards Brigade.†

We left the 2nd Infantry Brigade of 1st Canadian Division in Frosinone on 31st May.[85] On that morning Burns ordered 1st

---

* 61st Infantry Brigade was so designated on 29th May. On 21st May it had been formed as 'M' Brigade by grouping three Motor Battalions, namely:
2nd Battalion The Rifle Brigade from 7th Armoured Brigade
7th Battalion The Rifle Brigade from 9th Armoured Brigade
10th Battalion The Rifle Brigade from 26th Armoured Brigade.

† 6th South African Armoured Division (Major-General W. H. Evered Poole) was formed in South Africa, February–April 1943.[84] A large number of its officers and men had served in the South African forces during the campaigns in Italian East Africa and in the Western Desert. The division arrived in Egypt at the end of April 1943, and moved to Italy in April 1944, landing at Taranto on the 20th. Its outline Order of Battle was:

11th Armoured Brigade (Brigadier J. P. A. Furstenburg):
Prince Alfred's Guards, The Pretoria Regiment (Princess Alice's Own), The Special Service Battalion, The Imperial Light Horse/The Kimberley Regiment.
12th Motorised Brigade (Brigadier R. J. Palmer):
The Royal Natal Carbineers, The First City/The Cape Town Highlanders, The Witwatersrand Rifles/The Regiment De La Rey, The Royal Durban Light Infantry.
24th Guards Brigade (Brigadier A. F. L. Clive);
5th Battalion, The Grenadier Guards, 3rd Battalion, The Coldstream Guards, 1st Battalion, The Scots Guards.
Reconnaissance Regiment:
The Natal Mounted Rifles/The South African Air Force Regiment.
S.A. Artillery:
1st/6th Field Regiment, 4th/22nd Field Regiment, 7th/23rd Medium Regiment, 1st/11th A/Tk Regiment, 1st/12th L.A.A. Regiment.
S.A. Engineers:
8th and 12th Field Squadrons, 17th Field Park Squadron.
Two titles joined by an oblique stroke indicate that two units have 'married' to form one unit, a consequence of shortage of manpower. The tanks of the armoured regiments were Sherman V.

Digitized by Google

Canadian Division to continue the advance to Valmontone. He told Vokes that a brigade from 6th South African Armoured Division would join him on 1st June, to be followed by another, and so on until the whole South African Armoured Division took the lead. Burns also ordered 5th Canadian Armoured Division to withdraw into reserve.

Towards the end of May and during the first days of June the disease of congestion of traffic, endemic in the Liri valley, became epidemic and reached its height on Highway 6, a three-way Class 70 road.[86] 5th Canadian Armoured Division was withdrawing eastwards, and 6th South African Armoured Division was advancing westwards; the four medium regiments and one heavy regiment of No. 1 A.G.R.C.A. were struggling to advance to Pofi from positions east of the Liri at Ceprano; administrative traffic of 13th Corps and of the Canadian Corps was trying to pass up and down; 13th Corps' fighting units had the use of Highway 6 as far as Frosinone and there was a swarm of miscellaneous vehicles, some carrying staff officers upon useful duties, but most carrying Travelling Gentlemen (to borrow a phrase from our Army in the Crimea ninety years earlier). Staff officers at various headquarters seem to have given the same high priorities to traffic of any description; controllers of traffic and military policemen were scarce, inexperienced, and bewildered; tracks and diversions were confusingly signposted with the consequence that 'Up' and 'Down' routes were often not recognised, and often disregarded: traffic criminals of every kind rejoiced, in fact 'the sons of Belial had a glorious time'. One observer's experience (which we have quoted earlier) summed up the experiences of a multitude when he wrote, 'The road was hidden in dust as we edged into the northbound convoy and came to an immediate standstill'. Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Tweedsmuir, who had been ordered to examine the reason for 8th Army's slow advance (about 3.7 miles per day), wrote in the conclusion of his contemporary Report, 'The Eighth Army was never stronger or better equipped than now, but a good deal of avoidable delay took place, of which the cumulative result was that the enemy was able to withdraw in his own time and even break off contact'.[87] There is no reason to disagree with him. Moreover in July 1944 General Kirkman had this to say about exploitation:

> 'According to enemy prisoners, this is where the British Army often fails. A deliberate attack is successful; a gap is made in the enemy's defences; he expects a complete break-through with armour, and nothing much happens.'[88]

On 31st May Kirkman expected that the Germans would hold positions to cover the area (west to east) Ferentino–Fumone–Alatri,

Digitized by Google

a good forecast because we have seen that the Germans were to hold rear-guard positions at Ferentino and Alatri.[89] Kirkman therefore issued orders 'to drive in the enemy's outposts and to make contact with his main rear-guard position with a view to continuing the advance up the Alatri road'. 8th Indian Division was dealing with resistance a little north of Monte S. Giovanni, and 78th Division therefore was given the main task. Keightley decided that his 11th Infantry Brigade, now at Torrice, would advance to Alatri through Veroli. However the Germans withdrew from Monte S. Giovanni during the night 31st/1st June and 19th Indian Infantry Brigade followed up on 1st June to the Germans' next position at Veroli. This move made needless 11th Infantry Brigade's proposed advance, and Keightley decided to send his 36th Infantry Brigade, followed by the 11th, along the direct road Frosinone–Alatri. This necessary change of plan cost time.

The Germans at Veroli departed during the night 1st/2nd June, and 8th Indian Division was directed to move across country to Vico nel Lazio. 17th Indian Infantry Brigade therefore led across difficult 'going' until it was stopped east of Alatri by the deep gully of the Cosa stream. Engineers and two infantry battalions set to work to make the crossings. This was a toilsome job, and 17th Indian Infantry Brigade did not reach Vico nel Lazio until the afternoon of 3rd June. It then set out towards Guarcino. 36th Infantry Brigade met very little opposition and entered Alatri at dusk on 2nd June, and 11th Infantry Brigade then sent patrols onward to Fumone.

On the German side on the morning of 2nd June von Vietinghoff asked Kesselring's permission to withdraw 14th Panzer Corps to the Cäsar Line because this formation was no longer inflicting much damage on the enemy and consequently there was no advantage in holding it forward. von Vietinghoff and von Senger were also of the view that Clark, whose break through to Rome they now believed to be imminent, would not pause to celebrate but would at once strike towards Tivoli and beyond in order to encircle and destroy 14th Panzer Corps.[90] Kesselring was not easily convinced, but at 4.30 p.m. *AOK 10's* Chief of Staff told von Altenstadt that his corps might withdraw northwards as quickly as possible. 90th Panzer Grenadier Division was to hold the Allies at bay between Genazzano and Palestrina, and if possible was to counter-attack, but with a strong concentration in the neighbourhood of Tivoli von Senger's other divisions could head for positions in or in rear of the Subiaco sector of the Cäsar Line. Kesselring agreed to this policy because it seemed that *AOK 14* had nearly reached the end of its tether in its battles with the American Corps.

With Kesselring's permission in their pockets von Vietinghoff and von Senger quickly planned a retreat for the nights 3rd/4th and

Digitized by Google

4th/5th June. 29th Panzer Grenadier Division and 26th Panzer Divisions were at once to occupy positions on the line north of Valmontone–Paliano–Guarcino–Mt Rotondo. 15th Panzer Grenadier Division and 1st Parachute Division would be the first to withdraw—to Tivoli. The remains of 94th Infantry Division would withdraw to Vicovaro on the lateral Highway 5, north-east of Tivoli, as would some miscellaneous detachments. 15th Panzer Grenadier Division would follow the road through S. Vito Romano, 94th Infantry Division the road through Bellegra, and 1st Parachute Division the road through Piglio and Subiaco. 26th Panzer Division and 305th Infantry Division were to move to Arsoli and 29th and 90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions to Pisoniano to begin with. The interesting point in these orders was that 14th Panzer Corps was giving a wide berth to Valmontone. von Vietinghoff and von Senger expected the retreat to be slow and difficult because the relentless Allied air forces compelled the troops to move by day dispersed in small groups, and at night convoys would constantly be jammed in bottlenecks of every kind. The troops were ordered to abandon and destroy damaged vehicles and to jettison bulky equipment. The outlook was black indeed.

On 2nd June Kirkman had decided to pull 78th Division into reserve and to put 6th Armoured Division once more into the lead to carry out a long, fast pursuit.[91] He ordered the Armoured Division to pass through 78th Division at Alatri early on 3rd June and then follow the axis Trivigliano–Genazzano. 61st Infantry Brigade therefore took the lead and, dispersing small but stubborn rear-guards from either 29th Panzer Grenadier Division or 26th Panzer Division, entered Trivigliano early on 4th June.[92] Meanwhile 1st Guards and 2nd Lothians and Border Horse made a turning movement from Alatri through Fumone to Fiuggi. On 4th June 26th Armoured Brigade passed through 61st Infantry Brigade and advanced twenty miles almost to Genazzano in spite of many demolitions on the road and harassing shell fire. On 4th June, too, 8th Indian Division occupied Guarcino and Mt Civitella north-west of it. A pause followed to enable 8th Army to regroup for the advance north of Rome.

On 31st May Burns ordered 1st Canadian Division to continue the advance to Valmontone on the axis of Highway 6.[93] On 1st June 24th Guards Brigade and a squadron of tanks of the Special Service Battalion, both from 6th South African Armoured Division, were to join the Canadians, as would 12th Motorised Brigade, a squadron of the Natal Mounted Rifles/S.A. Air Force Regiment, and a squadron of tanks from Prince Alfred's Guards. Vokes ordered 1st Brigade to take Ferentino, and 2nd Brigade to take Mt Radicino, three miles east of Ferentino. The Candians met very little opposi-

Digitized by Google

tion, but the advance was slow because of many demolitions on Highway 6. The Loyal Edmonton Regiment took Mt Radicino at 10 p.m. on 1st June, and the Royal Canadian Regiment entered Ferentino before dawn on 2nd June. 1st Brigade set out again on the afternoon of the 2nd and by midnight 2nd/3rd June reached Anagni which was found to be in the hands of the Italian Resistance. On 1st June Leese had ordered Burns to halt at Anagni in order to allow the French Expeditionary Corps to take over Highway 6 for their further advance. On 3rd June therefore 6th South African Armoured Division took over from 1st Canadian Division. General Poole then turned his division northwards from Highway 6, and directed 24th Guards Brigade to Piglio and 12th Motorised Brigade to Paliano. Both brigades moved northwards on 3rd June, delayed, as was now usual, by demolitions and mines. Piglio and Paliano were occupied on 4th June, and 8th Army's part in the battle for Rome ended.

14th Panzer Corps' withdrawal turned out to be less damaging than had been feared.[94] On 4th June 90th and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, and 305th Infantry Divisions were holding rear-guard positions on the line Ponte Orsino–Trevi nel Lazio from which they were to retreat during the night 5th/6th June. On 4th June also the leading troops of 15th Panzer Grenadier Division and 1st Parachute Division reached Tivoli. Leading units of 26th Panzer Division were at Arcinazzo, south of Subiaco, and the Division's destination had been changed from Arsoli to Passo Corese on Highway 4 north of Rome. 94th Infantry Division was between Pisoniano and Ciciliano en route to Mt Pagliaro and Mt S. Angelo.

(vi)

See Maps 14 *and* 15

We left 6th U.S. Corps on 25th May when it had completed the first stages of its attack towards Valmontone. On that afternoon Truscott received Clark's order to continue the thrust towards Valmontone, but also to switch most of his Corps to two fresh attacks in other directions. The first of the new attacks was to pierce the German positions between Lanuvio and Campoleone railway station and then to thrust to Rome. The second of the new attacks, to begin on Clark's order, was to seize the Alban hills. Clark directed that the attack towards Rome was to begin not later than midday on 26th May. Truscott had long since prepared a plan for the Rome operation (Code-name 'Turtle') but to carry it out in the middle

Digitized by Google

of a battle which was already raging was a tall order. He wrote in his post-war memoirs:

> 'Considering the congested area and restricted road-net available for these preparations, [i.e. moves of divisions and so forth] a more complicated plan would be difficult to conceive. It was practicable only because staff preparation was thorough and complete and it was carried out by well trained, and disciplined troops; and because enemy capabilities for interference were limited.'*

The tasks of the divisions in opening the new attack towards Rome were as follows.[95] The left-hand division would be the 45th (Eagles) which would strike towards Campoleone station. 34th U.S. Division (Ryder), on the 45th's right, would strike towards Lanuvio. Both Combat Commands of 1st U.S. Armoured Division (Harmon) would advance on Velletri. 36th U.S. Division would take post south-east of Velletri to fill the gap between 1st U.S. Armoured Division and the force which was moving towards Valmontone, namely 3rd U.S. Division (O'Daniel) and 1st Special Service Force (Frederick). Very many things had to be done in a very short time in order to get the new attack under way. To name only some; the greater part of two divisions had to move distances of between four and fifteen miles on foot or in lorries; much of the artillery had to change positions; orders had to be issued right down the chain from headquarters of divisions to the enlisted man, and as much reconnaissance as possible had to be made. Everything was completed in eleven hours, a brilliant feat of organisation.

We have already noticed (in Section iii of this Chapter) that on 25th May part of 1st U.S. Armoured Division was closing on Giulianello, and that part of 3rd U.S. Division scattered German reinforcements in a sharp action near Cori. On 26th May 3rd U.S. Division, with Howze Task Force attached, moved onwards towards Artena with some deliberation.†[96] 30th Infantry left Cori and advanced towards Giulianello, scattering a small detachment of German infantry, and after dark its 1st Battalion seized Rocca Massima, capturing another German detachment. 15th Infantry marched the five miles or so from Cori to Giulianello, and made

---

* Truscott: *Command Missions*, (*op. cit.*) p. 375–6.

† Howze Task Force (Colonel Hamilton H. Howze) included (main units):

3rd Battalion 13th Armoured Regiment, 1st Battalion 6th Armoured Infantry Regiment, and 91st Armoured Field Artillery Battalion, all detached from 1st U.S. Armoured Division.

The Task Force remained in being until the end of the battle for Rome although its composition changed from time to time.

Digitized by Google

ready to attack Artena on 27th May. 7th Infantry marched northwards along the railway track from Cori station to Giulianello, and then took up positions on the hill-tops south-west of Artena. Howze Task Force moved north-west to a point west of Artena, and pushed a reconnaissance almost as far as Highway 6. On the whole O'Daniel's caution was lucky for the Germans because Herr's hold on the Valmontone area was shaky.[97] 715th Infantry Division had come badly out of the fighting since 23rd May and was now scattered, so far as Herr knew, from Cori to Norma, and as far even as Sezze, and had lost most of its heavy weapons and all its signal equipment. The divisional staff was sent back to Tivoli where, it was hoped, the division could be collected and rehabilitated. The reconnaissance battalion of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division had been driven into Artena by the Howze Task Force, and 2nd Hermann Göring Panzer Grenadier Regiment was assembling near Labico on the evening of 26th May.*

At 11 a.m. on 26th May 6th U.S. Corps renewed its attack towards Valmontone, and began its attack against the German positions on the line Velletri–Lanuvio–Campoleone station.[98] 1st U.S. Armoured Division advanced towards Velletri across broken country and against gradually stiffening resistance, and then, a little surprisingly, withdrew for maintenance. This withdrawal was lucky for 76th Panzer Corps because its delaying positions south and east of Velletri were makeshift and were held by the battered 362nd Infantry Division and troops attached from 1st Parachute Corps, namely: 2nd Battalion 145th Grenadier Regiment (from 65th Infantry Division), 3rd Battalion 8th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division), and detachments from 4th Parachute Division.[99] 36th U.S. Division relieved the armoured division with orders to fill the gap between 3rd U.S. Division and 34th U.S. Division, and to keep Velletri under pressure without becoming heavily engaged. The division played this passive part until 30th May.

The weight of Truscott's attack lay in the blows about to be delivered by 34th U.S. Division against Lanuvio and by 45th U.S. Division against Campoleone station, and these divisions shared the extra support of 228 guns provided by Corps, which included some 240-mm (9.4 inch) howitzers and 155-mm (6.1 inch) guns.[100] 34th U.S. Division attacked with two regiments, 133rd Infantry on the left, and 168th Infantry on the right. 133rd Infantry moving north-westward on the north side of the Cisterna–Campoleone

* According to 76th Panzer Corps War Diary 2nd H.G. Panzer Grenadier Regiment counter-attacked towards Artena at 9.30 p.m. and reached Macere (three miles west of Artena). 5th Army's contemporary history does not mention this event and it seems probable that the German diarist was mistaken.

Digitized by Google

railway, gained about a mile and a half and at 3.50 p.m. halted to allow 168th Infantry to draw level. This regiment had been held up for some time east of the Fosso di Carano but cleared the opposition during the late afternoon and then halted at the Fosso for the night 26th/27th May. 133rd Infantry however advanced again at 9 p.m. and by midnight 26th/27th May reached the Fosso dei Prefetti. 45th U.S. Division, with 157th Infantry right and 180th Infantry left, met determined opposition from 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division) which had a firm base in the old stronghold of Aprilia, and brought down fire from guns, machine guns and tanks upon 180th Infantry which had open ground to cross. At length, however, this regiment with the help of tanks from 191st Tank Battalion worked forward to the Fosso di Spaccasassi and the southern end of the Fosso dei Prefetti and took a fair haul of prisoners. Truscott's main attack had got under way at exceedingly short notice and had won, in general, about a mile and a half of ground, at least a fair beginning in the circumstances.

Kesselring and von Mackensen could not of course instantly perceive the change in the American offensive, and on 26th and 27th May they continued to expect that the enemy would do his best to capture Valmontone, as this would be an important objective.[101] On the 27th Kesselring informed *OKW* that 1st U.S. Armoured Division, 36th U.S. Division and 3rd U.S. Division were heavily engaged south of this locality, with the object of reaching Highway 6 and then turning north-westwards. In a directive sent to 1st Parachute and 76th Panzer Corps, also on 27th May, von Mackensen expressed much the same view. He assumed that Clark would use most of 5th Army to advance on the axis Velletri–Valmontone with the object of cutting *AOK 10's* L. of C. He assumed also that apart from this main advance Clark would have available 1st and 5th British Divisions, 45th U.S. Division, and two battalions of tanks to thrust north-westwards between Aprilia and the Alban hills, and that this subsidiary group might be reinforced. It was not until 29th May that *AOK 14's* Intelligence Staff recognised the changed direction of Truscott's main attack and identified Lanuvio and Campoleone station as principal objectives.

On 26th May, Kesselring backed his reading of the battle by directing towards Labico and Artena the parts of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division which had arrived south-east of Rome, and the whole division was placed under command of 76th Panzer Corps.[102] From the southern part of this Corps' front, 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 29th Panzer Grenadier Division), part of 8th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (from 3rd Panzer Grenadier

Digitized by Google

Division) and some artillery were ordered towards Valmontone, where Kesselring and von Mackensen intended to employ the whole of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division as soon as that division could be relieved by 334th Infantry Division which was arriving from the Adriatic coast.* Meanwhile two battalions of 334th Infantry Division's 765th Grenadier Regiment, which had reached Tivoli, were sent to Artena, as was 71st Werfer Regiment.

With the task of throwing the Americans back from the Valmontone area given to 76th Panzer Corps, 1st Parachute Corps was assigned a defensive role. In orders issued by von Mackensen at about 9 p.m. on 26th May Schlemm was given discretion to withdraw slightly from his positions at Aprilia, although Kesselring insisted on the 27th that strong rear-guards must be left there.[103] 1st Parachute Corps was also to take under command 362nd Infantry Division from 76th Panzer Corps, because Kesselring had decided that this division would fall back to the Cäsar Line (which in this sector ran from south-east of Lanuvio to Labico on Highway 6) to prepare an all-out defence of Velletri. 362nd Infantry and 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division were to join hands on a line which ran north and south a little to the east of the hamlet of Colle Marcavallo, a mile south-east of Campoleone station.

76th Panzer Corps was to counter-attack early on 27th May, using the Hermann Göring Panzer Division in order to drive the Americans back to Rocca Massima from their positions near Artena, and also out of Giulianello. The lot of this unfortunate Corps was far from happy. We have already described (in Section v) Herr's attempts to delay the advance of the French Expeditionary Force in the Lepini mountains. But he had also to delay 2nd U.S. Corps in which, at this time, 85th U.S. Division was approaching the line Sezze–Roccagorga, and 88th U.S. Division was in Roccagorga.[104] Herr derived little comfort from his superiors' permission to withdraw to the line Rocca Massima–Roccagorga–Prossedi because the Americans were already in Rocca Massima and Roccagorga and the French were ten miles or so north-west of Prossedi. The line moreover was twenty-two miles long and to defend it was beyond the resources of the crippled 76th Panzer Corps.

The simplest method of continuing the narrative of operations which seem suddenly to explode into dozens of local engagements without much general impetus or sweep is to describe events at Valmontone from 27th to 30th May, and then those at Velletri, Lanuvio, and Campoleone station during the same period.

---

* We have already noticed [p. 253] that this plan could not be carried out, and that 29th Panzer Grenadier Division was transferred from 76th Panzer Corps to 14th Panzer Corps on 1st June.

Digitized by Google

On 27th May Howze Task Force advanced towards Highway 6, but drew so much artillery fire that it retired to the line of the railway west of Artena.[105] 1st Special Service Force advanced to the hilltops immediately overlooking Artena where the 75-mm pack howitzers of 463rd Field Artillery Battalion came into action. 15th Infantry came up from Giulianello in lorries during the morning and its 2nd Battalion, supported by tanks, attacked Artena and captured the place by 3.20 p.m. 3rd U.S. Division then took up defensive positions. 1st Special Service Force occupied Artena, and 15th Infantry dug in a little west of Artena with 7th Infantry some distance to its rear. Howze Task Force continued to hold the line of the railway, and 30th Infantry remained at Giulianello. During the day Major-General Benno Schmalz, Commander of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division, counter-attacked with 1st and 2nd Hermann Göring Panzer Grenadier Regiments.*[106] Neither attack was successful, and at dusk the two regiments and the division's greatly weakened reconnaissance battalion were holding a line from Artena station to Macere, facing Howze Task Force. The German documents state that Schmalz counter-attacked during the morning of 27th May but the contemporary American history says that the attacks began at 7.30 p.m. The fact of the attacks and their outcome are not in doubt. A similar conflict of evidence attends the operations of 28th May in the Artena–Valmontone area.[107] German documents speak of heavy fighting but the American history remarks 'During the 28th our forces were content to improve their defences and to patrol vigorously in order to determine the enemy strength'.[108] The American history notes that at about dusk on 28th May 1st Special Service Force repulsed German infantry and tanks which advanced from Valmontone towards Artena. The German account contrariwise declares that Schmalz's division at 6 p.m. repulsed American tanks which were advancing from Artena towards Valmontone. Schmalz was then able to push some of his troops southwards on the Valmontone–Velletri road until they reached Lariano at 10.50 p.m.

A battle is fought in the light of situations as they appear to commanders at the time and not as they appear to the historian. The conduct of a battle is usually guesswork, sometimes inspired, but guesswork all the same. Thus O'Daniel believed, on 28th May, that he had won a vantage point from which he could strike to cut Highway 6, but that his force was not big enough for the job.[109] The Hermann Göring Panzer Division seemed too large and formidable to be attacked without circumspection. O'Daniel and

---

* Schmalz had taken over the Hermann Göring Panzer Division from Conrath on 10th April 1944.

Digitized by Google

other American commanders also felt that the right flank of 6th U.S. Corps was dangerously exposed even though 2nd U.S. Corps and the French Expeditionary Corps were steadily approaching along Highway 7 and through the Lepini mountains. On 29th May H.Q. 2nd U.S. Corps came forward by Highway 7 and at 2 p.m. took charge of operations in the neighbourhood of Artena and Valmontone.[110] H.Q. 4th U.S. Corps temporarily took control of the American advance from the south-east.* On 29th May at 10 p.m. 337th Infantry, from 85th U.S. Division, arrived at Rocca Massima and Giulianello, and on the 30th the same division's 338th Infantry and the divisional artillery arrived also.[112] On 1st June 88th U.S. Division arrived and began to concentrate at Rocca Massima. Meanwhile in the advance to Valmontone precious time was passing; every day, every few hours almost, which the Americans let go by without much more than strong skirmishings, helped 14th and 76th Panzer Corps to escape. 2nd U.S. Corps which had absorbed 3rd U.S. Division did not begin a further large operation until the afternoon of 31st May.

The contemporary historians of 5th Army, Colonel John D. Forsythe and Lieutenant-Colonel Chester G. Starr, very neatly summarize the fighting during the period 28th—30th May on 6th U.S. Corps' main front:

> 'The ingenuity and craft of the Germans in defense were rarely better demonstrated than in the battle of Lanuvio. Since our right flank [34th U.S. Division] was already pressed up against the main German defensive line, our progress on 28–30 May consisted of a great wheeling movement with the 34th Division as pivot. As each unit to the left in turn came up against the German defenses, it was stopped, with the result that the forward motion of our drive kept shifting farther and farther to the left. Here the 45th Division, aided from the 29th by the 1st Armoured Division, pushed first west, then slowly north-west towards Albano; on the right the infantry battalions of the 34th Division surged up vainly day after day against the enemy strong-points east of Lanuvio.'[114]

34th U.S. Division in fact ran up against part of the forward defences of the Cäsar Line which, south and south-east of Lanuvio, formed a chain of strongpoints between Villa Crocetta and S. Gennaro hill (Pt 202).[115] The ground was none too favourable for the attacker who had to cross open wheatfields, then gullies of the Fosso di S. Gennaro and then had to climb steep slopes to the crest

---

* H.Q. 4th U.S. Corps (Major-General Willis D. Crittenberger) had been in 5th Army Reserve since its arrival in Italy on 28th March.[111]

Digitized by Google

of the ridge. The German troops here were drawn from 362nd Infantry Division and 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division. The defence was based on carefully sited heavy and light machine guns, and a few roving self-propelled guns or tanks. From 28th May until 30th May 168th and 133rd Infantry were constantly in action and on 30th May Ryder committed his third regiment, 135th Infantry, which had been helping 1st U.S. Armoured Division. 34th U.S. Infantry Division attacked Villa Crocetta and the S. Gennaro hill ten or eleven times, often in pairs of battalions, but Ryder never applied a tactical principle which Field Marshal Montgomery has expressed concisely:

> 'In all offensive operations endeavour to hit hard on a narrow front, and keep on hitting, penetrate deeply and then turn outwards . . . The momentum of the attack must be kept up at all costs.'*

Whatever the causes may have been, the results of the attacks were depressingly alike: small numbers of very tired infantry would reach some of their objectives, only to be dislodged by the familiar German quick counter-attacks.

On the front of 45th U.S. Division 157th and 180th Infantry advanced with some difficulty, on 28th May, to the Via Anziate south of Campoleone station.[116] During the night 28th/29th May Truscott committed his only important reserve by ordering 1st U.S. Armoured Division, which had completed its maintenance, to attack northwards up the Via Anziate on 29th May. 45th U.S. Division was to regroup and follow. On 29th May, then, 1st U.S. Armoured Division set out, with Combat Command 'A' on the right and Combat Command 'B' on the left. By noon a German rear-guard had been driven out of Campoleone station and the armour struck northwards followed by infantry. As soon, however, as the tanks approached the Cäsar Line the German anti-tank guns came fiercely into action. By dusk 37 American tanks had been knocked out, most of them destroyed. On 30th May the armoured division renewed its attack and in most places the infantry led, in the hope of driving the anti-tank guns away in order to clear the way for the tanks. These hopes were not fulfilled, and by the evening of 30th May the American divisions had been halted.

Thus by the evening of 30th May 6th U.S. Corps had been fighting for five days to carry out the orders which Clark had so suddenly and confidently given during the night 25th/26th May, and had very little to show for its pains. In truth, however, the Americans had done better than was apparent. On 28th May von Mackensen, with

---

* *Some Notes on the Conduct of War and the Infantry Division in Battle* (21st Army Group 1944), p. 18.

Digitized by Google

Kesselring's approval, had given Schlemm permission to prepare to withdraw 1st Parachute Corps to the Cäsar Line which was the last ditch in the defence of Rome.[117] By the end of 29th May parts of 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division and 362nd Infantry Division were papering over cracks in the defence of Lanuvio, and a gap nearly one and a half miles wide and a mile deep had been made by the Americans in the area of Campoleone station. During the night 29th/30th May 4th Parachute Division was allowed to withdraw to the Cäsar Line.

At 1.15 a.m. on 30th May von Mackensen issued a revised estimate of the enemy's intentions. He now believed that 5th Army, having failed to take Valmontone, would switch its main effort to attacking in the area between the Alban hills and the coast. He ordered 1st Parachute Corps to stand firm in the Cäsar Line and demanded of 76th Panzer Corps that it check the French advance from Carpineto, in addition to keeping up the pressure near Valmontone.

As we have seen, the French were not checked but the situations on the more northerly fronts of *AOK 14* and 5th Army now were curious. von Mackensen and his chief subordinates had little confidence in their power to hold the Cäsar Line. On the other hand the American attacks seemed to have stalled and needed a fillip. Chance provided this at exactly the right moment.

On 29th May Truscott was considering a plan to break the stalemate at Lanuvio by using 36th U.S. Division to climb into the Alban hills in a wide flanking movement on the east, in conjunction with a similar manoeuvre by 34th U.S. Division on the west.[118] He discussed this plan with General Walker (36th U.S. Division) on the morning of the 30th. Walker then told him that his patrols had discovered very few Germans on the Velletri–Valmontone road as far as Lariano, that Mt Artemisio, which stands west of the road, seemed to be unoccupied, and that there was a fair track running up the mountain. Here then was an opportunity to outflank Velletri and Lanuvio and to occupy a commanding feature on the eastern side of the Alban hills, which could be a jumping-off place for operations in these hills in almost any direction. Truscott decided to grasp the opportunity and ordered Walker to seize Mt Artemisio with a strong force that very night, 30th/31st May.

Walker's patrols had indeed discovered a soft spot which no German commander had even thought of until 28th May. There was a reason for this oversight.[119] Nothing suggested that Mt Artemisio, which was more than three miles west of the Cäsar Line, should form a bastion in it, or would be useful as anything other than

Digitized by Google

an observation post, and at least one artillery O.P. had been placed on it. However, on 28th May the danger clouds which were looming in the south-east and south caused von Mackensen to order his Corps commanders to reconnoitre defence lines in the Campagna and in the Alban hills. 76th Panzer Corps was told to examine a line which ran from a point east of Lake Albano to Rocca di Papa, Rocca Priora, and Cave, north of Highway 6. Mt Artemisio had then to be considered as a possible advanced position in the new line. The discovery that the mountain was undefended seems to have made Herr and Schmalz uneasy because, after a discussion between these officers on 28th May, Herr's Chief of Staff sent an order to 715th Infantry Division to scrape together at Tivoli a force to defend the mountain under the orders of Schmalz.[120] Before this force could be assembled the Americans had advanced to Mt Artemisio through a gap in the German positions in the plain below. The gap existed because the Hermann Göring Panzer Division and 362nd Infantry Division had failed to interlock. On 29th May 1st Hermann Göring Panzer Grenadier Regiment moved southwards along the Valmontone–Velletri road from Lariano to make this contact, and met a unit of 362nd Infantry Division at Villa Vigna Menta. The Hermann Göring Regiment then placed a company at Angeloni, between Vigna Menta and Lariano, but 362nd Infantry Division left nothing at Vigna Menta although 76th Panzer Corps' Operations Officer had asked his opposite number in 1st Parachute Corps to arrange to place a post near the boundary between the divisions.

On 30th May, then, 36th U.S. Division's 142nd Infantry, led by its 2nd Battalion, crossed the highroad near Villa Vigna Menta in darkness, slipped through some sheltering vineyards and olive groves and began to climb the steep, wooded slopes of Mt Artemisio.[121] Dogs barked but nothing else disturbed the clambering, sweating soldiers, By 6.35 a.m. on 31st May 142nd Infantry reached Pt 931 and Maschio d'Ariano at the northern edge of Mt Artemisio. The sole enemy found on the way was an O.P. party from 192nd Artillery Regiment which surrendered. 142nd Infantry then descended Mt Artemisio's south-western slopes to Maschio dell' Artemisio and by 7.30 p.m. on 31st May had occupied positions which overlooked the road from Velletri to Lake Nemi. 143rd Infantry meanwhile had consolidated positions on the mountain, untroubled by hasty jabs delivered by the Hermann Göring Panzer Division from the north-east.

Reports of the American exploit reached the German higher commanders very slowly, probably because no one had imagined that a large American force could possibly arrive on Mt Artemisio silently and unseen. The Commander of 1st Hermann Göring Panzer Grenadier Regiment's post at Angeloni reported that after

Digitized by Google

a peaceful night he was surprised at being mortared from behind at 11 a.m. on 31st May. An untimed report by *AOK 14* mentioned that the Hermann Göring Panzer Division was mopping up a small party of infiltrators on Mt Artemisio, and 76th Panzer Corps' final situation report on 31st May mentioned indifferently that one and a half American battalions had occupied the mountain and had pushed out detachments to a little beyond Maschio d'Ariano. The news disturbed no one until it reached Kesselring, but he exploded with fury. At 9.30 p.m. on 31st May he ordered von Mackensen to recapture Mt Artemisio at any cost, even to using all the Hermann Göring Panzer Division's tanks and extracting units from the northern front of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division as well. On 1st June he sent a stinging rebuke to von Mackensen, repeated to von Vietinghoff, for failing to report the loss of Mt Artemisio early enough to enable him to take action to regain it. He declared that von Mackensen's lapse jeopardized his whole defensive plan, and he promised to punish immediately and severely any commander who offended in this fashion in the future. On this occasion Kesselring did more than issue a harsh reprimand. He used the Mt Artemisio affair as the means which he had been seeking to obtain von Mackensen's dismissal.[122] In putting the case to the authorities in Germany he alleged that von Mackensen constantly differed from him in opinion, did not believe that the tasks which Kesselring gave him were practicable, and made no great effort to perform them. Kesselring's wish was met when *OKH* transferred von Mackensen to the Reserve of Officers with effect from 2nd June and appointed General Joachim Lemelsen to be Acting Commander of *AOK 14*. von Mackensen, however, continued in command until 7th June when Lemelsen took over.*

On 31st May Clark issued his Operation Instruction No. 25 which gave his three Corps their tasks in crushing *AOK 14* which he now declared to be his purpose.[123] 2nd U.S. Corps was to capture the high ground north of Valmontone, was to block Highway 6, and was to capture the northern part of the Alban hills. The Corps was then to be ready, on Clark's further order, to pursue and destroy any German forces which were retreating north-westwards, and also to send detachments south-eastwards towards Ferentino to intercept and destroy any German forces which were withdrawing on the fronts of 8th Army and of the French Expeditionary Corps. 6th U.S. Corps was to capture the southern part of the Alban hills

* Lemelsen had temporarily commanded *AOK 10* when von Vietinghoff was ill during November and December 1943. His appointment to command *AOK 14* was made substantive on 1st September 1944.

Digitized by Google

'and drive forward with the utmost speed to cut the routes of withdrawal of enemy forces through Rome and then turn strong forces south-west to annihilate the enemy against the Tiber River to the west'. The French Expeditionary Corps was to seize the high ground near Segni in order to protect 5th Army's right flank and to help 8th Army's advance. Besides these actions by the three Corps, 5th (British) Division, which was under 5th Army's direct command, was to 'Press forward rapidly towards the Tiber River to cut off and destroy enemy forces that have been turned south by the VI Corps'.

The practical points in these instructions were the reconstitution of 2nd U.S. Corps with 85th U.S. Division (Coulter), 88th U.S. Division (Sloan) and 3rd U.S. Division (O'Daniel), and the allotment of distinct areas of operations to 2nd and 6th U.S. Corps. The instructions about cutting the German escape routes and annihilating German forces against the Tiber were grandiloquent and meaningless because in practice the two American Corps had little choice except to follow their noses to Rome. Colonel Forsythe sums up the results of Clark's instructions in the following words:[124]

> 'During the next three days the attack by Fifth Army proceeded generally on the basis of these instructions. VI Corps slugged its way slowly north toward Albano against stubborn enemy opposition, which weakened from east to west as the 36th U.S. Division pushed across the center of Colli Laziali (Alban hills) behind the German main line of resistance. The troops of II Corps first forced back the Hermann Göring Panzer Parachute Division and then from 2 June exploited the rapid enemy withdrawal north of Colli Laziali.'

We now have to sketch 5th Army's operations during the last five days of the battle for Rome, on each day presenting, for clarity's sake, first the advance of 2nd U.S. Corps, and second that of 6th U.S. Corps, and mentioning when necessary the steady approach of the French Expeditionary Corps from the Lepini mountains to join hands with 2nd U.S. Corps.

See Map 14

At 1.30 p.m. on 31st May, in 2nd U.S. Corps, 85th U.S. Division advanced north-westwards to exploit 36th U.S. Division's capture of Mt Artemisio and to clear the way for the Corps' main attack next day, 1st June.[125] 337th Infantry skirted Lariano, leaving a battalion to deal with a forlorn company from 715th Infantry Division which had been sent there, and climbed Mt Artemisio, untroubled by any Germans, to relieve 143rd Infantry at Maschio d'Ariano (Pt 891)

Digitized by Google

early next day, 1st June. On 337th Infantry's right 338th Infantry destroyed 2nd Battalion, 1st Hermann Göring Panzer Grenadier Regiment and advanced to positions a little north of the Artena–Macere road.

In 6th U.S. Corps 135th Infantry (34th U.S. Division) attacked towards the railway line west of Lanuvio but gained little ground although supported by nine field battalions of artillery which included one of 8-inch howitzers and one of 155-mm guns. Part of 133rd Infantry joined in without greater success. There was a feeling in the air that 36th U.S. Division's advance from Mt Artemisio towards the Velletri–Nemi road might induce the Germans to abandon Velletri and so 36th Combat Engineer Regiment attacked the place at 5.30 p.m. but was stopped by fire from artillery, mortars and machine guns. South-west of 34th U.S. Division a battalion of 179th Infantry (45th U.S. Division) and 191st U.S. Tank Battalion attacked on the east of the Via Anziate with no success. At 5.30 a.m. Combat Command 'B' (1st U.S. Armoured Division) followed by 1st Battalion 157th Infantry advanced for a short distance along the railway line north-west of Campoleone station but that was all. By the end of 31st May 161 medium tanks and 48 light tanks of 1st U.S. Armoured Division had been knocked out in the fighting since 23rd May.* Casualties among the tank crews indeed weakened the division more than the loss of tanks, and twenty crews sent forward by 752nd U.S. Tank Battalion (4th U.S. Corps) only partly replaced the losses. 6th U.S. Corps made little ground on 31st May, yet Schlemm was now feeling the strain of six days of fighting and reported at 5.20 p.m. that his 1st Parachute Corps was stretched almost to breaking point.[126] This report would have gladdened the American commanders if it had been intercepted because they had seriously under-estimated the quality of Schlemm's troops, in particular 4th Parachute Division (Trettner).

On 1st June 2nd U.S. Corps began its main attacks at 5.30 a.m.[127] The general direction of these attacks was northwards, 3rd U.S. Division being directed on Valmontone, and Cave north of Highway 6; 85th U.S. Division on Mt Ceraso; and 88th U.S. Division, at a time to be decided later, on Colle Gardella north of Highway 6 and south of Zagarolo. It was the Hermann Göring Panzer Division's unenviable lot, shared by some miscellaneous units, to face these three American divisions. It fought hard.

In 3rd U.S. Division 15th Infantry advanced on the east of the Artena–Valmontone road, and 30th Infantry and Howze Force on

* 117 medium tanks and 25 light tanks of those which had been knocked out were recovered for repair, and spare tanks were sent forward, so that by the close of 31st May the armoured division was short of full strength by no more than 13 medium and 17 light tanks.

Digitized by Google

the west of the road. By 2 p.m. the Americans had penetrated the Hermann Göring Panzer Division's positions between Artena and Macere, and an hour later Howze's tanks were approaching Highway 6.[128] Here 2nd Hermann Göring Panzer Grenadier Regiment used tactics which can be ventured only by experienced and steady troops; it lay hidden while the American tanks drove through and then emerged to engage the infantry following. It was not until 9 p.m. that the Americans fastened their grip on Highway 6. 30th Infantry, on the left of Howze Force, did not advance far. On the right of 3rd U.S. Division the Special Service Force occupied the high ground south-east of Valmontone.

In 85th U.S. Division 338th Infantry advanced very slowly and when it inclined north-westwards 349th Infantry (of 88th U.S. Division) came up to fill the gap which was opening between the left of 3rd U.S. Division and the right of 85th U.S. Division. 85th U.S. Division's 337th Infantry moved slowly northwards across the thickets and gullies of Mt Artemisio, strongly opposed by German infantry on three hills further to the north.

Although the American advance was slow it was sufficient to bring Herr to the verge of breakdown. To make things worse he had lost contact with 29th Panzer Grenadier Division which was trying to hold the line Montelanico–eastward to Gorga against the French Expeditionary Corps, which on 1st June advanced almost to Montelanico and occupied Morolo. Herr decided to try to regroup the remains of his Corps on the line Rocca di Papa–Macere–Highway 6 but by nightfall he realised that he had already lost the northern portion—Macere to Highway 6. He reported to von Mackensen that 76th Panzer Corps would not withstand further hard pressure unless it was reinforced.

In 6th U.S. Corps 36th U.S. Division attacked Velletri whither 12th Parachute Regiment and bits and pieces of 362nd Infantry Division had retreated after failing to regain Mt Artemisio. Shortly after 8 a.m. on 1st June Schlemm reported that the troops in Velletri would have to withdraw if they were not to be entrapped. von Mackensen then sent Herr an impracticable order to help at Velletri, and ordered forward a battalion of military police from Rome, the only fresh troops on which he could lay hands. At 9.40 a.m. Schlemm's Chief of Staff informed Hauser that Velletri was under attack and that its garrison had taken up positions east and north-east of the town, prior to withdrawing towards Nemi, which they did that evening.[129] A battalion of 141st Infantry entered Velletri at 4.30 p.m., but the situation was not clear-cut and the Americans spent the night 1st/2nd June in mopping up.

At Lanuvio 34th U.S. Division renewed its attacks on 1st June. Here after a hard fight 3rd Battalion, 168th Infantry and 109th

Digitized by Google

Engineer Battalion captured Pts 202 and 225 on the hill slopes to the south-east, but Villa Crocetta (near Pt 209) stood firm. Although the Germans held fast, their casualties were heavy enough to cause Schlemm to ask von Mackensen for reinforcements, in vain because the Army Commander had none to give. In the neighbourhood of Campoleone 65th Infantry Division gave very little ground to infantry of 45th U.S. Division and 1st U.S. Armoured Division.

Although *AOK 14* was fighting well von Mackensen's morale sank low on 1st June. At 5 p.m. his Chief of Staff told Kesselring's Operations Staff that *AOK 14* could not guarantee to hold Valmontone on 2nd June because the Americans appeared to be on the point of beginning an all out thrust to Palestrina, a movement which would cut off Valmontone. Kesselring's orders, however, made no concessions. He directed that the enemy must be prevented from 'outflanking' the Alban hills and from reaching Valmontone by the 'ruthless exploitation of every possibility'. Pending the arrival of reinforcements which he did not name, *AOK 14* was to muster its miscellaneous units and base details and hold a line running through the Alban hills (north-west of Pt 891) from Lanuvio to a point east of Lake Nemi and then to Fontana di Vivaro and Labico. At about 7 p.m. Kesselring directed that Valmontone must be held because it was an essential point of contact with *AOK 10*. von Mackensen passed these orders on to Herr, adding that 76th Panzer Corps must hold its front to the last. He told Schlemm that the right flank of 1st Parachute Corps must stand fast while 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division and 362nd Infantry Division withdrew to the line Lanuvio–Fontana di Vivaro. Schlemm replied that he could hold this line for twenty-four hours at longest because it could be outflanked from Mt Artemisio. He said also that he was hard pressed at Campoleone.

On 2nd June the German commanders from Kesselring down to the Corps Commanders of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* realised that the defence south of Rome could not be continued. Hitler and the staff of *OKW* had formed the same opinion but toned down its expression, as when General von Buttlar of *OKW's* Operations Branch declared on 2nd June that it was doubtful whether Kesselring's forces could hold on much longer south of the Tiber.[130] Permission to evacuate Rome was granted in the message which reached Kesselring's headquarters at 3.55 p.m. on 3rd June. By this time Hitler had made up his mind to reinforce and rebuild Army Group C, so that it could carry on the campaign in Italy despite the loss of Rome and the impending invasion of north-western France. And so on 3rd June *OKW* defined Kesselring's conduct of operations in the next phase. He was to resist south and south-east of Rome for as long as possible to gain time to evacuate Rome and to allow *AOK 14* to cross the

Digitized by Google

Tiber. Thereafter he was to withdraw the western wing of his Army Group to the most favourable line nearest to the Tiber that he could find. He might then nurse and refit his troops but he was also to fight delaying actions to prevent the Allies gaining ground (Hitler's familiar obsession), and to win time to occupy defensive positions which should, if possible connect with the Cäsar Line, that is to say its sector north-east of Subiaco.

In the field, neither of Kesselring's Army Commanders liked what the future seemed to hold.[131] At *AOK 14* von Mackensen and Herr were sunk in despondency by 2nd June, and Schlemm could hardly be called hopeful although he was a good and resolute commander.* At this time *AOK 14* indeed seemed about to break up. Yet although its senior commanders were dismayed, units still fought stubbornly and skilfully, repeating many former demonstrations of the splendid quality of the German soldier. It was his courage, endurance, and skill, as much as anything else, which brought the decisive defeat, claimed by Clark in his Operation Instruction of 26th May, to nothing, and stalled for seven long days Clark's 'powerful forces' directed on Valmontone and his 'new attack along the most direct route to Rome'.[132]

At *AOK 10*, von Vietinghoff and von Senger believed (as we have noted on p. 258) that the Allies could cut off 14th Panzer Corps by striking towards Tivoli, and on 3rd June Kesselring's Operations Staff agreed that things would go hard with *AOK 10* if the enemy were quickly to reach its main withdrawal route up the Tiber valley by cutting the Tivoli–Palombara road. (*see Map 11*)[133] Unease for the outcome of the retreat was deepened by the Allies' fierce and successful air attacks on the roads in rear of von Vietinghoff's front. On 1st June, for example, 'important' roads were blocked at Tivoli, S. Vito Romano, and Bellegra, and as the last two named were bad secondary roads it was a measure of the Allies' achievement that they had become 'important'. Near Subiaco, a mile of road was reported on 31st May to be so completely destroyed that repairs would occupy 48 hours, even if there were no further interference from the enemy.

Profoundly anxious though they were for the vulnerability of their escape routes, the higher officers of *AOK 10* had their divisions well in hand and on 2nd June this army was much further from disintegration than was *AOK 14*. At this time, to recall 8th Army temporarily to mind, from right to left (*see Map 16*) 17th Indian Infantry Brigade (8th Indian Division) was advancing from Alatri towards Vico nel Lazio, 11th Indian Infantry Brigade was moving

* His staff too, it seems, had changed from the 'Cigar Smoking Do-Nothings', as Kesselring had named them at the end of January.

Digitized by Google

from Alatri to Fumone, 36th Infantry Brigade (78th Infantry Division) was at Alatri, and 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade (1st Canadian Infantry Division) was at Anagni. 6th Armoured Division was under orders to advance from Alatri on the axis Trivigliano–Genazzano. We can therefore see by hindsight that *AOK 10* was in very little danger from 8th Army.

See Map 14

On 2nd June in 2nd U.S. Corps 30th Infantry (3rd U.S. Division) found Valmontone unoccupied because by 11.45 a.m. the reconnaissance battalion of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division, with a wounded commanding officer and a fighting strength of eighteen men, had retreated to Palestrina where, with 135th Flak Regiment, it tried to make a defensive position.[134] 30th Infantry and 751st U.S. Tank Battalion then moved northwards to Cave. At Cave General Böhlke, Commander of 334th Infantry Division, was trying to collect the two battalions of his 765th Grenadier Regiment which had come forward on 27th May, sundry engineers and assault guns, and the remains of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division's armour. The remains of the Hermann Göring infantry had withdrawn five miles north-westwards to Colle di Fuore which stands a mile and a half south of Highway 6. Two battalions of 7th Infantry and Howze Task Force moved a short distance along Highway 6 to Labico, where the infantry turned northwards towards Palestrina. On the extreme right of 2nd U.S. Corps 15th Infantry relieved 1st Special Service Force south-east of Valmontone. The Special Service Force then moved south-eastwards along Highway 6 to make contact with the French Expeditionary Force, and to catch any enemy troops who were withdrawing before it. The Americans met the French at Colleferro at 3.30 p.m. There were no Germans to catch. By the time that the stable door at Valmontone had been bolted, the German horses had trotted away, north of Highway 6 in the direction of Genazzano, Paliano, and Piglio.

88th U.S. Division, which had moved up to become the centre division in 2nd U.S. Corps, advanced to S. Cesareo on Highway 6 by 4.30 p.m. on 2nd June. German opposition was trivial and the Americans picked up some prisoners and a fair amount of equipment. In 85th U.S. Division 337th Infantry spent the day of the 2nd in capturing Mt Ceraso; 338th Infantry drew level with S. Cesareo which it reached at 10 p.m.; and on the left of the corps 339th Infantry did not move until the afternoon and then took Mt Fiore, south-west of Mt Ceraso and overlooking the Via Latina.*

* The ancient Via Latina passes through Colleferro from Highway 6, and then north of Artena and Macere, running north-westwards through the middle of the Alban hills to Rome.[135]

Digitized by Google

On 2nd June 6th U.S. Corps pressed north-westwards and north. On its right was 36th U.S. Division, its Infantry Regiments deployed in line: 143rd on the right, 142nd in the centre, and 141st on the left. 143rd Infantry captured Colle Tano, east of Rocca di Papa; the battalion of German military police bolted, but 12th Parachute Regiment hung on at Rocca di Papa.[136] 142nd Infantry advanced to the hills on the eastern side of Mt Cavo which is itself east of Lake Albano. 141st Infantry and part of 36th Engineer Combat Regiment advanced along Highway 7 until they were relieved by 157th Infantry (of 45th U.S. Division) during the afternoon. 141st Infantry then turned northwards towards the hills east of Lake Nemi. It is impossible to say what German formations opposed these attacks but they seem to have been part at least of 362nd Infantry Division and of 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division.

The advance of 36th U.S. Division helped 34th U.S. Division. 157th Infantry (belonging to 45th U.S. Division but temporarily under command of 36th U.S. Division) advanced from Velletri westwards to Colle Colonna.[137] At 4.30 a.m. on 2nd June a special raiding party from 168th Infantry (of 34th U.S. Division) found the hitherto impregnable Villa Crocetta (Pt 209) abandoned, and at daybreak the whole regiment moved north-westwards across the hill to the railway line. 100th Battalion however found that the ridge west of Lanuvio still harboured machine guns and self-propelled guns. West of 168th Infantry the Germans still held on as 133rd Infantry discovered. On 45th U.S. Division's front Trettner's 4th Parachute Division stood firm and even counter-attacked.

At 7.20 p.m. on 2nd June Alexander summed up the operations in these words:

> '. . . I visited Clark today. He is confident that he can break the German front on the Colli Laziali. His troops are fighting magnificently, and I think he has a fair chance. A lot will depend upon the arrival of fresh German divisions which are on their way.* If Clark does not succeed within the next 48 hours we shall have to stage a combined attack by both Fifth and Eighth Armies when the latter gets up. I saw Leese yesterday. His Army is coming up well but is being seriously hampered in their advance by extensive demolitions and the extraordinarily enclosed nature of the country. I knew it would be difficult but was surprised to find it so broken and enclosed when I went over it yesterday . . .'[139]

* To watch the coast near Civitavecchia, Kesselring intended to bring 20th G.A.F. Field Division south from Leghorn, also 356th Infantry Division which was to move from the area of Genoa. By 4th June leading units of these formations were nearing Lake Bolsena, and on orders from *OKW* the newly forming 19th *Luftwaffe* Field Division and 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division were stationed north of Grosseto.[138]

Digitized by Google

Alexander was certainly not counting his chickens before they were hatched.

We have already described the plans which Kesselring and von Vietinghoff made to withdraw *AOK 10* to Tivoli and the Cäsar Line. We need now concern ourselves only with *AOK 14*.

At 11.25 a.m. on 2nd June *AOK 14's* Chief of Staff told Kesselring that the enemy had crossed Highway 6 east and west of Valmontone and that there was no hope of stopping him there.[140] As 90th Panzer Grenadier Division (14th Panzer Corps, *AOK 10*) was now reported to be near Genazzano Herr appealed for a counter-attack to prevent the enemy from pressing on to Palestrina. Kesselring replied at 12.15 noon that 90th Panzer Grenadier Division would advance on Valmontone from the direction of Rocca di Cave and Olevano, while 29th Panzer Grenadier Division would advance from Segni station. This plan was never carried out because 14th Panzer Corps had its hands full in conducting its own retreat. As the day went on and Herr sent his snippets of bad news to von Mackensen, and von Mackensen passed them on to Kesselring, it became clear that *AOK 14* was near the end of its endurance. Nevertheless at 4.30 p.m. Beelitz, of Kesselring's Operations Staff, told Hauser, *AOK 14's* Chief of Staff, that the Army's task was to prevent the enemy from breaking through to Rome. Hauser retorted that the enemy had as good as broken through. Later the only defensive measure that von Mackensen could suggest to Kesselring was that he (von Mackensen) should send two battalions from 4th Parachute Division to Torre Gaia, about four miles from Rome on Highway 6, to block that highway and the Via Tuscolana as well. Kesselring agreed, and told von Mackensen that on 3rd June he would discuss the possibility of evacuating Rome. This was a change from the peremptory and icy orders which Kesselring usually gave to his subordinate. During the night of 2nd/3rd June von Mackensen sent back two battalions of 11th Parachute Regiment and 4th Parachute Division's staff and most of its artillery. At 10.15 p.m. he ordered the rest of 1st Parachute Corps to hold a line from the railway near Cecchina north-eastwards to Lake Nemi, and then passing south of Rocca di Papa to Mt Fiore, and gave to 76th Panzer Corps the task of preventing the enemy from breaking through between Rocca Priora and Palestrina. He promised Herr reinforcements in the shape of replacement battalions and as much of 334th Infantry Division as could be collected from Tivoli. In the event Allied air attacks prevented these reinforcements from moving.*

* The following are further examples of the dislocation caused by air attacks. The Hermann Göring Panzer Division's two infantry regiments each 'lost' a battalion north of Rome, and on 1st June military police were searching for them. On 3rd June one

Continued opposite

Digitized by Google

On 2nd June Alexander temporarily altered 8th Army's left boundary in order to allow 2nd U.S. Corps and the French Expeditionary Corps more elbow room.[142] The new boundary ran from Paliano to Cave, Palestrina, and Tivoli. Keyes now ordered his Corps to wheel from north and north-west to west in order that his divisions might advance westwards between Tivoli and the Alban hills, with 3rd U.S. Division on the right north of Highway 6, and 85th U.S. Division on the left. The main attack towards Rome was to be made by 88th and 85th U.S. Divisions and a strengthened Howze Task Force. Howze was to lead the advance along Highway 6. Phase lines were given in order to co-ordinate the advance but units were not to halt until they reached the north to south road from Tor Sapienza to Torre Spaccata about four miles from the outskirts of Rome. The alteration of 8th Army's boundary gave Juin the channel which he had wanted through which the French Expeditionary Corps could advance to the Tiber, outflanking Rome on the northern side.[143] On 3rd June, 3rd Algerian Infantry Division took over from 3rd U.S. Division between Cave and Valmontone. The Algerian Infantry Division was to lead the way to the Tiber followed by 1st French Infantry Division, while 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division became a flank-guard between Cave and Gallicano. The French Corps thus covered the right of 5th Army and the left of 8th Army.

Truscott had no reason to alter the general north and north-westward directions of 6th U.S. Corps' attacks on 3rd June. 2nd U.S. Corps' advances in the Alban hills on 2nd June, as well as his own, the thinning out of the Germans in the neighbourhood of Lanuvio, and their disappearance from the hill slopes of Villa Crocetta (Pt 209) suggested that Schlemm was on the point of withdrawing from his positions south of the Alban hills.

During 3rd June the divisions of 2nd U.S. Corps pressed forward north and north-westward against failing German resistance.[144] 3rd U.S. Division remained as a flank-guard on the general line Cave–Palestrina until relieved by 3rd Algerian Division. Howze Task Force cleared detachments of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division off Highway 6 and reached Osteria Finocchio by dusk. 1st Special Service Force then took up the running on Highway 6 and reached Tor Sapienza by 4 a.m. (on 4th June). 88th U.S. Division was equally successful and reached a line south of Tor Sapienza during the night. 85th U.S. Division reached Frascati. 6th U.S. Corps was kept at bay rather longer by Schlemm's Corps

---

battalion was found at Sutri (north of Lake Bracciano). On 30th May *AOK 10's* War Diary noted that 305th Infantry Division from the Adriatic coast had arrived almost without administrative units and equipment e.g. field kitchens. The men were in poor condition and showed disturbing signs of exhaustion.[141]

Digitized by Google

defending Mt Due Torri (Pt 415), and only reached the general line Cecchina–Lake Albano by dusk. 1st U.S. Armoured Division then 'went into temporary bivouac areas while plans were being made for the dash on Rome', to quote Colonel Forsythe's history.

The two British divisions launched their attack on the coastal flank of 6th U.S. Corps under 5th Army's direction and, like the Americans, met continuing resistance during 3rd June.[145] The fighting was not easy. Sergeant M. A. W. Rogers of 2nd Battalion The Wiltshire Regiment was awarded a posthumous V.C. for his gallantry during the day. That night clear signs were detected that the Germans were withdrawing from their main positions and a general advance began early on 4th June.

On the German side nothing but bad news from 76th Panzer Corps and 1st Parachute Corps reached von Mackensen in his headquarters at Prima Porta, north of Rome.[146] The same or kindred reports reached Kesselring in his headquarters near Civita Castellana. The loss of Rocca Priora was reported, also of Mt Compatri and Zagarolo. At Mt Cavo a medley of replacement battalions and miscellaneous details from 362nd Infantry Division was scattered. At 12.40 p.m. Schlemm reported that 11th Parachute Regiment, led by its Divisional Commander, Trettner, was trying to stop the American advance on Highway 6 and between the road and Frascati, but that Colonna and, two miles north of it, Pallavicina had been lost. A strong American force was advancing along the Via Latina towards Frascati. At 1 p.m. von Mackensen reported that he no longer had enough troops to prevent the enemy from breaking through between Zagarolo and Highway 6. He believed that he might be able to hold his positions west of Lake Albano until the evening but he could not draw upon troops in that quarter to reinforce others elsewhere. At 4.45 p.m. he reported that he was raking together a scratch force to hold Torre Gaia in the hope of checking the American advance on Highway 6 because 11th Parachute Regiment had shot its bolt and was falling back towards Centocelle airfield.

Kesselring meanwhile was awaiting Hitler's answer to his request for permission to evacuate Rome. We have seen that he was told at 3.55 p.m. that the city must not become a battlefield, and von Mackensen was informed of this decree at 4.45 p.m. Kesselring authorised *AOK 14* to retreat across the Tiber to positions which had yet to be chosen, and added that it must leave a rear-guard at Castel di Decima south of Rome. At the same time this decision was passed to Schlemm who was for no very clear reason ordered to hold the left flank of 1st Parachute Corps' sector at all costs. However Kesselring and von Mackensen by evening believed that the enemy had advanced to the line Torre Nova (on Highway 6) north to

Digitized by Google

Salone Vecchio. Therefore it was clear that 1st Parachute Corps must retreat if it was not to be cut off. Kesselring then issued a directive (which unfortunately bears no time of origin) to the Commanders of *AOK 10* and *AOK 14*, and of the *Luftwaffe* in central Italy.[147] He declared that the outcome of the fighting north of Valmontone and south-east of Rome made it impossible to defend any longer the fronts from Tivoli to the Alban hills and from Lake Albano westwards to the Via Ostia. *AOK 14* would therefore withdraw across the Tiber during the night 3rd/4th June and might use routes on both sides of Rome. Kesselring directed that a 'bridgehead' must be held south-west of Tivoli to prevent the enemy from driving a wedge between *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* by striking towards Tivoli from Palestrina. This task was given to 15th Panzer Grenadier Division under command of 76th Panzer Corps, and the site of the 'bridgehead' would be in the neighbourhood of Ost. Capannelle. The remainder of *AOK 10* was to hasten its withdrawal to the line Tivoli–Subiaco–Cäsar Line and to the positions which had already been allotted to its divisions, detailed on p. 260 von Senger moved 14th Panzer Corps' tactical headquarters to Orvinio: *AOK 10* placed its Operations Staff at Limiti di Greccio, north-west of Rieti; and Kesselring sent his headquarters back to Monsummano, south-west of Pistoia.

Possession of Rome gave the Allies political and propaganda rather than military advantages. The military gains accrued from Rome's position as one of the focal points of Italy's rail and road systems, and the site of several bridges across the Tiber. These slight advantages are one of the reasons why the end of the battle for Rome, after twenty-four days of hard fighting between four Armies, seemed to be almost an anti-climax.* Another reason lies in the nature of the fighting on 4th June which was not a dramatic and violent conflict of armies in the manner of Waterloo but consisted of affairs between small mobile columns from 5th Army and light German rear-guards. Then no Allied fighting troops stopped at Rome except a small garrison. There was no pause in operations. The German armies withdrew to defensive lines north of Rome. On 6th June Alexander defined his next object as:

---

* The title 'The Battle for Rome' appears as the heading of 15th Army Group's Operation Instruction No. 34 dated 12th January 1944.[148] The Report of the Battles Nomenclature Committee, approved by the Army Council (H.M.S.O. 1956) gives the name 'Rome' to the fighting 22nd May to 4th June.[149] This report of course applies only to the Land Forces of the British Commonwealth during World War II.

Digitized by Google

> '. . . to complete the destruction of the German armed forces in Italy and in the process to force the enemy to draw to the maximum on his reserves whereby I shall be rendering the greatest assistance to the western invasion ['Overlord', which began on 6th June] of which my Armies are capable'.[150]

He ordered 8th Army to advance with all possible speed to the general area Florence–Bibbiena–Arezzo and 5th Army to the general area Pisa–Lucca–Pistoia.[151]

See Maps 11 *and* 14

The principal advances to Rome on 4th June were made by American forces along the Via Prenestina, the Via Tuscolana, and Highway 7. On the extreme right the French Expeditionary Corps headed for the Tiber north of Rome. During the afternoon 3rd Algerian Infantry Division, followed by 1st French Infantry Division reached Lunghezza on the Aniene river and found the bridges blown.[152] At this point, however, Juin was ordered to halt and clear the roads to allow 6th South African Armoured Division to pass. On the coast, 5th (British) Division met little opposition and reached the Tiber by midday, but 1st Division, inland, met stiffer resistance from German rear-guards and did not reach the Tiber for a further twenty-four hours.[153]

Meanwhile 2nd and 6th U.S. Corps had pushed columns down all the roads leading to Rome.[154] *AOK 14's* rear-guards, principally formed from 1st Parachute Corps, fought a self-sacrificing delaying action until about midday when they started their final disengagement.[155] Schlemm reported to von Mackensen at 1.35 p.m. that his troops were being so closely pursued that he might not be able wholly to obey Hitler's order that there must be no fighting in the streets. Fighting might be the only way to gain time for his troops to cross the Tiber.

In the late afternoon American advanced guards nosed their way into the city and by midnight they had all the Tiber bridges within the city in their hands.[156] Clark ordered 3rd U.S. Division to garrison Rome. The British and French provided representative contingents: 1st Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, and a composite French battalion from all four divisions of Juin's Corps.

On the afternoon of 4th June General Wilson sent to the British and American Chiefs of Staff one of the baldest messages to have ever marked the successful end of a great military operation: 'The Allies are in Rome'. General Clark had achieved his very understandable ambition 'that Fifth Army was going to capture Rome'.[157] There was too much scattered shooting for him to enter the city on

Digitized by Google

4th June and so he postponed his entry until the morning of 5th June when he proposed to confer with his corps commanders about the next phase of operations, naming the Capitoline Hill as a rendezvous to which all might find their way. He has described with disarming humour how he lost his way until he met an American priest and a Roman youth who offered to guide his little party: 'We had been welcomed and taken in tow by a priest and a boy on a bicycle'.[158] Mr. Churchill, however, found felicitous words to signalize the achievement of Clark and his Army:

> 'It gives me the greatest pleasure to congratulate you once again on your brilliant leading of the United States, British, and other Allied troops under your Command. We rejoice with you in their splendid exploits, comradeship, and tireless energy.'[159]

As was fitting, showers of glittering compliments swept in from all corners of the globe—for Marshal Stalin and Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek sent messages—and fell upon the heads of the Allied commanders of the three services and their men. As an example the War Cabinet had this to say in a message to Wilson:[160]

> 'The War Cabinet also wish to express their thanks for the magnificent support General Alexander's Armies have received from General Eaker and the Allied Air Forces, both Strategical and Tactical; and also to Admiral Cunningham and to the British and United States Naval Forces under his command, upon whose zeal and efficiency everything else was founded.'[161]

It was a happy coincidence that the success of the Allied Spring offensive thoroughly justified the code-name which had been chosen for it: 'Diadem'. Yet although every workaday soldier, airman, and sailor had earned this royal badge of distinction and honour it is unlikely that any one of them felt that 'a broad white fillet set with pearls' encircled his old tin hat. Perhaps the true feelings of the military man in the street have been best and movingly expressed by a young American officer who described his division setting out from Rome very early on 5th June, along the Via Aurelia: 'On this night the infantry would have the same old cold rations for their fare, while behind they left a city wild with rejoicing'.*

The Armies did not pause to enjoy their victory. On 5th June Alexander signalled to the C.I.G.S.:

> 'The next phase of the battle is now in full swing. There is a good deal of mopping up, reorganising and sorting out to be done but this is NOT delaying the advance by light mobile elements who are everywhere in contact with the enemy rear-guards . . .'[162]

---

* Harold L. Bond: *Return to Cassino* (New York 1964) p. 198.

Digitized by Google

Already, on 4th June, he had signalled:

> 'If only the country was more open we would make hay of the whole lot. However you may rest assured that both Armies will drive forward as fast as is physically possible . . .'[163]

(vii)

At the end of every battle, whether it is fought by platoons or by Army Groups, the saddening count of casualties has to be made. Alexander's offensive from inclusive 11th May to 4th June cost the Allied land forces 43,746 men killed, wounded, and missing.*[164] On 4th June Kesselring estimated that his casualties amounted to 38,024 but he remarked that this figure was approximate because his divisions were too disorganized to make accurate returns.[166] On the other hand the German medical service treated 21,600 wounded by 31st May and British records give the number of prisoners counted in the 'cages' of 5th and 8th Armies between 11th May and 4th June as 24,334.[167] These totals, which are probably reliable, of the German wounded and prisoners of war, together amount to 45,934. Because we have no figures for the German dead we must estimate their number and will do this cautiously by assuming that they amounted to 75% of the total of Allied dead. We then obtain a figure of 5,820 odd, which added to 45,934 wounded and prisoners gives a total of 51,754 German casualties. This figure probably is too small but will serve in a rough comparison of Allied and German casualties: 43,746 Allied, 51,754 German.

The Allies' loss of material was not great because their armies remained in possession of each battlefield and it was therefore possible to recover damaged equipment for repair. Imperfect records prevent us from presenting a full statement of losses but something may be learned from the following figures for the main

---

* A breakdown of the Allies' casualties is:

	Killed	*Wounded*	*Missing*	*Total*
British, including Canadian, New Zealand and Indian	2,263	8,978	924	12,165
United States	3,160	13,870	1,088	18,118
French	1,634	7,325	605	9,564
Polish	714	2,846	339	3,899

The figures for French and Polish casualties are taken, as are the figures for British casualties, from contemporary tables prepared by the statistical section of the Adjutant-General's Branch in the War Office. The figures were compiled from cables submitted by A.F.H.Q. o2E North Africa and were subject to correction, but what corrections were made cannot now be ascertained. The methods of presenting figures of casualties were rather complicated and in fact caused Mr. Churchill to complain: on 20th May and 5th June.[165] British casualties during the twelve-day battle of El Alamein were 13,560. The figures for United States casualties are taken from the contemporary History of 5th Army.

Digitized by Google

types of tanks and guns in 8th Army.[168] The tables include replacements from reserves.*

Tank	Fit		Temp. unfit		Workshops	
	11 May	4 June	11 May	4 June	11 May	4 June
Sherman I and II	101	97	3	3	—	2
Sherman III	554	513	6	26	8	5
Sherman V	558	495	11	38	10	11
Churchill I	11	14	6	—	—	2
Churchill III & IV	89	75	12	9	3	—
Total	1,313	1,194	38	76	21	20

	In Action	
Gun	*5 May*	*4 June*
25-pdr	650	550
4.5-inch	95	91
5.5-inch	118	129

We have already given [p. 250] Kesselring's estimate of his material losses up to 29th May. His figures are partly confirmed by the replacements sent to him from Germany between 21st May to the end of June.[169] These were:

Machine guns	2,000
Light field howitzers	200
Medium guns	70
Tanks and assault guns	165
Motor transport	Lift for 7,700 tons

On 4th June Kesselring re-estimated that he had lost some 200–250 tanks by the end of May, and told *OKW* that returns for the next few days were not yet available. As these were days of hard fighting we can be sure that actual losses exceeded his first estimates.[170]

The German losses in men and material must be counted as a gain for the Allies because Alexander, in his appreciation dated 22nd February, had given slaughter and destruction as one object of his operations.†[171] German war establishments varied, but if we assume

* The History of 5th Army's accounting period begins at the end of March and we are unable to break down the consolidated totals.

† He wrote: 'It is obvious that the most effective way of making the enemy draw on other theatres for troops for employment in Italy is . . . to destroy enemy formations in Italy to such an extent that they must be replaced from elsewhere to avoid a rout. Tactical plans should therefore be designed to bring about situations in which enemy formations can be destroyed or so reduced in strength as to be non-effective, rather than for the primary purpose of gaining ground'. See Chapter I for this appreciation.

Digitized by Google

that in 1944 that of an infantry division was about 13,000 men, of a division's artillery about 54 guns and howitzers, and of a panzer regiment about 100 to 136 tanks, Kesselring had lost the men of about four divisions, the artillery of five divisions, and the armour of about two panzer regiments.[172] Moreover, very happily for the Allies' purpose of containing German forces in Italy and of drawing into Italy forces which might have been used to oppose 'Overlord', Hitler decided to reinforce the Italian campaign. Between the middle of May and the end of the first week in June four infantry divisions were ordered to Italy from other countries, as well as the equivalent of the infantry of three divisions if we reckon two three-battalion regiments to a division. In addition Kesselring committed two divisions from the Adriatic front and brought down three from northern Italy.*

Besides counting casualties and assessing damage, we must consider to what extent the Allied and German leaders had fulfilled their intentions. Alexander had expressed his intention in these words:

> 'To destroy the right wing of the German Tenth Army; to drive what remains of it and the German Fourteenth Army north of Rome; and to pursue the enemy to the Rimini–Pisa line inflicting the maximum losses to him in the process'.†

Hitler, on the other hand, had directed in January 1944 that the Gustav Line was to be held and 'decisively fought for', and he expected the troops of *AOK 10* to feel that their honour was at stake over the defence of every inch of ground.[174] The Führer's directives were always heeded by Kesselring and the Gustav and Hitler Lines had been built for prolonged defence. Behind them the Cäsar Line had been added as a kind of insurance but it had not been completed. North of Rome, a sluggish start had been made on the Gothic Line in the Apennines, but Hitler would not countenance its occupation until the late summer of 1944.

---

* The formations which Kesselring received from other countries comprised:

16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division	from	Hungary
19th *Luftwaffe* Field Division	,,	Belgium
20th *Luftwaffe* Field Division	,,	Denmark
42nd Jäger Division	,,	Croatia
Ten *Marsch* Battalions	,,	Germany
Three Mountain Warfare Training Schools	,,	,,
Transferred within Italy:		
305th Infantry Division	,,	Adriatic front
334th Infantry Division	,,	,,
278th Infantry Division	,,	Northern Italy
356th Infantry Division	,,	,,
162nd Infantry Division	,,	,,
Three Alpine Battalions	,,	,,

† A.A.I. Operation Order No. 1, dated 5th May (see Chapter II).[173]

Digitized by Google

Now, by the end of the first week in June, the Allied Armies had driven *AOK 14* and the greater part of *AOK 10* (since part of this Army was stationed on the Adriatic coast) out of the Gustav and Hitler Lines and out of the western part of the Cäsar Line. Mediterranean Allied Air Forces had contributed decisively by winning and then maintaining supremacy in the air. *AOK 14* was withdrawing northwards from Rome and *AOK 10* to a line Tivoli–Subiaco, and beyond Subiaco into that part of the Cäsar Line which ran from Tagliacozzo to Avezzano, and Popoli. The Germans therefore had failed in all their purposes but *AOK 10* and *AOK 14* were at least retreating in an orderly fashion and, in spite of their losses, with a morale that was not much damaged.* The large number of Germans taken prisoner was not a sign of a widespread desire to be 'out of it', but of the fact that many troops stood their ground until they had to surrender or die.

The Allied Forces in Italy had gained a victory. They had utterly confounded German purposes and had inflicted heavy losses of men and material upon the German forces. They had advanced about eighty miles and had shown that Mr. Churchill and his Chiefs of Staff had wrongly imputed 'stagnation' to the campaign in Italy. They were achieving the strategic object of the campaign by containing German forces in Italy and by attracting reinforcements which the German High Command, short of manpower and of disposable reserves, could less than ever afford since the tidal wave of 'Overlord' was about to surge into north-western France. They were driving the German armies northward from Rome. Yet they had failed in two particulars. They had not destroyed the right wing of *AOK 10*, and they had not made the 'cop' which Churchill and Alexander had so much desired and had expected.

It has long been accepted that on 25th May General Clark departed from Alexander's orders that 6th U.S. Corps was to cut Highway 6 near Valmontone and thus cut *AOK 10's* L. of C. It is a general principle in military affairs that a subordinate commander must never depart from the letter or spirit of a superior's orders unless in special circumstances. Such circumstances, in barest

---

* Observers in Vatican City noticed the orderly retirement but also that the troops looked tired and dejected.[175] An Intelligence report, based on the interrogation of prisoners up to 3rd June, remarks:[176]

> 'Morale of 15 Panzer Grenadier Division and 1st Para Division still good . . . Belief in final German victory still held by more than 50% prisoners from these Divisions . . . In rear areas troops were of lower category than troops in front line and consequently of lower morale. The general morale of these troops, when thrown into line apparently deteriorated somewhat . . . '

The report then says of German troops in Italy in general:

> 'No longer belief in likelihood of German victory, though on this subject crack troops still put on a brave face, but carrying out mission of holding up Allied Armies and playing for time. There is still strong faith in the Führer . . . '

Digitized by Google

outline, are the appearance of a new situation or of new factors which an absent superior commander cannot know, and which the subordinate cannot report to him in time to receive a reply before losing an opportunity or endangering his force. In these circumstances the subordinate must act in the way in which he believes his superior, if he were present, would order him to act. This general principle was embodied in the British Army's Field Service Regulations, and Alexander had reason to think that it was observed in the American Army.*

On 25th May Clark did not face a new situation or new factors and he could very easily communicate with Alexander. He knew that Alexander's orders stood because Alexander had ordered 6th U.S. Corps to strike at Valmontone on 23rd May. In short he had no reason to depart from Alexander's orders except his ambition that 5th Army should be the first to enter Rome.

Clark's determination to achieve his ambition spoiled his judgement and led him to disregard the principle of war which is termed maintenance of the objective. Mistaken judgement made him see the successful beginning of 6th U.S. Corps' attack as a decisive defeat of the German troops in the area of Cisterna and Cori. It is true that Truscott's Corps had driven 715th Infantry Division from the Mussolini Canal and 362nd Infantry Division from Cisterna, and near Cori had temporarily scattered 1060th Grenadier Regiment and the Hermann Göring Reconnaissance Battalion. These successes however were not decisive because at this stage of Truscott's battle there was nothing to decide. Truscott had successfully completed the first stage of his advance to Valmontone and nothing more. In this first phase he had used his armoured division, two U.S. infantry divisions, and the Special Service Force, and had in hand two U.S. infantry divisions and two weak British infantry divisions. In the second phase—the advance to Artena and its capture—Truscott intended to use the same number of divisions as in the first phase and would have in hand the same number as before.† On 25th May he believed that one armoured division, two infantry divisions and the Special Service force formed a force strong enough to cut

---

* On 10th February 1944 the Prime Minister had signalled to Alexander apropos of the actions of Generals Clark and Lucas at Anzio: 'I have it from the highest American authorities that it is their wish that their troops should receive direct orders. They say their Army has been framed more on Prussian lines than on the more smooth British lines, and that American Commanders expect to receive positive orders which they will immediately obey . . .'[177]

† Phase 1. 1st U.S. Armoured Division, 3rd and 45th U.S. Divisions, Special Service Force.
In Hand: 34th and 36th U.S. Divisions, 1st and 5th British Divisions.

Phase 2. 1st U.S. Armoured Division, 3rd and 36th U.S. Divisions, Special Service Force.
In Hand: 34th and 45th U.S. Divisions, 1st and 5th British Divisions.

Digitized by Google

Highway 6 at Valmontone on 26th May. There is no reason to think that he was wrong. To oppose him on the 26th the Germans mustered a part of 362nd Infantry Division, detachments from 1st Parachute Corps, and the Hermann Göring Reconnaissance Battalion. 715th Division was off the board, and the Hermann Göring Panzer Division was arriving piecemeal at the front, as were parts of 3rd and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions. If, as seems probable, Truscott had decided that to complete his task he must push onward from Valmontone to roughly the line of the road Genazzano–Palestrina–Gallicano he could have added one U.S. infantry division to the Valmontone force. He would then still have had one U.S. and two British infantry divisions to guard the beachhead and the L. of C. to Valmontone against a counter-stroke by Schlemm's 1st Parachute Corps.

Then on 25th May came Clark's order for one attack towards Rome and for another against unspecified objectives in the Alban hills in addition to the attack on Valmontone. Truscott assumed that the attack on Rome was the most important and he allotted to it 1st U.S. Armoured Division and 34th and 45th U.S. Divisions, keeping 36th U.S. Division to cover the gap between the Rome and Valmontone forces. The Valmontone force was reduced willy nilly to the reinforced 3rd U.S. Division and the Special Service Force. The proof of the pudding then lay in the eating. The Valmontone force failed to cut Highway 6 until the evening of 1st June. The Rome force could not overcome the stubborn defence by 1st Parachute Corps until six days had passed. To sum up, Clark had replaced one objective by three objectives, Truscott had been obliged to split his force and had then not been strong enough to win anywhere until 2nd U.S. Corps arrived to lend a hand.

If we try to guess what might have happened if Clark had not changed his plan we are let down by the German records which are known to us as they do not tell us precisely what units were withdrawing on Highway 6 and the roads just north of it up to the morning of 2nd June. We therefore cannot say how many would have been cut off if Truscott had reached Valmontone on 26th May or a day or so later. We do however know that until 1st June the three German Commanders who were most concerned—Kesselring, von Vietinghoff and von Senger—were at best very worried by the possibility, and at worst feared the probability that 5th Army would drive a wedge between *AOK 14* and *AOK 10* and cut off 14th Panzer Corps. They saw Valmontone as the point of danger until 1st June, and even on 2nd June Kesselring was thinking of staging a counter-attack on the place. von Vietinghoff and von Senger still feared for 14th Panzer Corps but now placed the point of danger at Tivoli.

Digitized by Google

This is as far as the available evidence can take us. At the time Alexander behaved with the discretion and tact which befitted his style of command.* He knew that nothing was to be gained from quarrelling with an Allied Army commander or from rebuking him. He held his peace and found generous things to say about 5th Army. On 2nd June he signalled to Sir Alan Brooke: 'I visited Clark today. He is confident that he can break the German front on the Colli Laziali . . . '[178] and on 4th June: 'The broad picture is that we have blown a large hole between Albano and Palestrina. This is a brilliant success for Fifth Army who have pushed rapidly forward to the outskirts of Rome . . . '[179]

Alexander's diplomacy was the more valuable because at this time the British and American Chiefs of Staff were becoming steadily more at odds about the future policy of the campaign in Italy.

It is unfair to suggest that the Allied armies failed to gather the full fruits of the Spring offensive simply because of Clark's error of judgement. The slow advance of 8th Army in the Liri and Sacco valleys was a contributory cause of the failure. At a pace of three miles, or at best a little under four miles in the day, 8th Army never pressed the rear-guards of 14th Panzer Corps and 51st Mountain Corps so hard as to threaten the shrunken main bodies of these formations. The main reasons for this shortcoming were Leese's mistaken choice of the type of division to lead 8th Army's advances, and his failure to judge correctly the nature of the ground in the Liri and Sacco valleys.

Leese had commanded the Guards Armoured Division in England, and 30th Corps in the Desert where armour had a strong claim to the throne of the Queen of the Battlefield. In consequence he thought that armour was pre-eminently the mobile arm in all circumstances and conditions, a belief which was not true in Italy where so much of the terrain was unsuitable for armour. The valleys of the Liri and Sacco rivers are a case in point. These valleys for most of their length are defiles not more than three or four miles wide. They are crossed by four main water obstacles formed by the River Melfa, by a bend of the River Liri near Ceprano, and by the Formelli and Meringo streams. They are crossed by lesser streams also which are nevertheless big enough to require bridging. The cross-country 'going' too is difficult for wheels and tracks. These valleys have been called 'the road to Rome', and although they may seem gentle and

---

* Mr. Churchill, in his memoirs, has given us a glimpse of Alexander when about to take command of the hopeless campaign in Burma in March 1942: 'Nothing ever disturbed or rattled him, and duty was a full satisfaction in itself, especially if it seemed perilous and hard. But all this was combined with so gay and easy a manner that the pleasure and honour of his friendship were prized by all who enjoyed it . . . '
The Second World War, Volume IV, (London 1951) p. 147.

Digitized by Google

easy in contrast with the mountains on either hand, they are a bad road for large bodies of mechanized troops with thousands of vehicles.*

In spite of the natural obstacles, Leese rammed two corps abreast into these defiles because he wished to exploit in strength. He approved when his corps commanders placed their armoured divisions in the lead in terrain which was so unsuitable for them that they, and everything behind them, crawled.†

Staff work at the headquarters of 8th Army, and in the corps and divisions generally, was unsatisfactory when it dealt with tactical moves by road of large formations. The staffs did not keep in mind a picture of the whole system (too imposing a name in fact) of roads and tracks and all that moved on them, and so too often formations which were ordered forward found themselves moving against a tide of others which had been ordered back. If such contretemps arose from the plans and were unavoidable, they were faults in the plans which the staffs should have seen and remedied. If there was no remedy, the plans should have been recast because the approach to battle is as important as the fighting.

A contemporary report wisely remarked that 'Operational pressure resulted in more traffic on the routes than the routes could possibly accommodate . . . Whatever the operational situation, the staff must not put more traffic on a road than the road will stand . . . '[181]. And the same report remarks: 'Traffic was by far the greatest single cause of the delay . . . With two corps on such a narrow front in a country with so few roads and tracks some traffic difficulties were inevitable but traffic at times was almost brought to a standstill by avoidable mistakes'. One mistake was the laxity which allowed on the roads a swarm of inessential vehicles which was more than half the total. If the staff work was in many ways unsatisfactory, so also was the march discipline of units. For some strange reason few things are more resented by units than the imputation that their march discipline is less than perfect. In the 8th Army, nevertheless, march discipline was poor.

Ignorance of the nature of the ground was strange. Italy was not unknown as were the sand seas of Africa before Bagnold and others made their journeys of exploration and founded the Long Range Desert Group. Guide books to Italy had been written for generations

---

* At a peak period 11,542 vehicles passed a check-point on Highway 6 in 8th Army's area during 24 hours. The average number during 24 hours was about 8,000.[180]

† The usual pace was so slow that 26th Armoured Brigade on 4th June treated its advance of twenty miles between dawn and dusk as something of a feat. For comparison, in September 1918 during the Palestine campaign, 5th Cavalry Division rode 50 miles in 23 hours. 3rd and 75th Infantry Divisions marched 20 miles in 24 hours which included engagements with Turkish rear-guards.

Digitized by Google

of travellers, and in 1944 good maps were plentiful, and excellent mosaics of air photographs had been made by Mediterranean Allied Photographic Reconnaissance Wing. Yet even Alexander reported his surprise at the difficult country encountered by 8th Army during its advance (see p. 277).[182]

Criticism of the operations of war is a barren pursuit. James Wolfe, not long before he passed down the St Lawrence, the path of glory which led him to the grave, wrote 'People must be of the Profession to understand the Disadvantages and Difficulties we labour under . . . '.[183] Even this understanding does not carry the critic very far. Unlike the television camera he cannot recall past events in slow motion, and even had he this power he would find that much of the film was missing or spoiled. He cannot often demonstrate the truth of Clausewitz's dictum that 'everything is very simple in war but the simplest thing is difficult'.* Instead of labouring the matters which went wrong in the Allies' offensive it is as useful and assuredly more pleasant to notice a few of the many matters which went right.

Field Marshal Earl Wavell has remarked that in war 'it all depends upon administration and transportation . . . a real knowledge of supply and movement factors must be the basis of every leader's plan.'† We will be looking at the administration of A.A.I. in detail in Chapter VIII. Administrative efficiency is, however, so essential to operational success that we should note here that the foundations for the administrative side of the offensive were laid by Sir Brian Robertson when Deputy Chief Administrative Officer at FLAMBO and then as Chief Administrative Officer at Headquarters A.A.I. (See *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V, Chapter XII). The administrative machine, which he and the administrative staffs and Services built and operated, worked with exemplary efficiency and reliability. On the operational side the deception plan stands out most because it achieved an astonishing success. The plan was brilliantly conceived and executed. Its object was to persuade the German commanders that the Allies' attacks between the west coast and the Cassino massif were made simply to divert attention from their main stroke, which was to be a powerful descent upon Civitavecchia from the sea. Execution of the plan began in April, and it soon convinced Kesselring and the German Intelligence Staffs that the next Allied land offensive in Italy would precede or be accompanied by landings on the west coast. Kesselring had been completely surprised by the landings at Anzio, and so even earlier

* Carl von Clausewitz (translated by J. J. Graham): *On War* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1956, Sixth Impression) Vol I, p. 77.

† *Speaking Generally*, (London 1946), p. 79.

Digitized by Google

than April had made dispositions to guard against again being caught unawares. The deception plan led him to place his Army Group reserves in the wrong places, and although about 16th May he began to see that he had been deceived, he was then only able to commit them in driblets. He thus lost his main means of regaining the initiative and his mistake was almost fatal. Here too we must remark that if German Intelligence officers were bad, Alexander's were excellent. One of the tests of overt military intelligence is the success of its patient work on the enemy's Order of Battle. Alexander's Intelligence officers had acquired a detailed and accurate knowledge of the German Order of Battle in Italy, and they followed formations and units with the piercing and almost affectionate scrutiny which a Victorian Great Lady devoted to a legion of grandchildren.

In 8th Army's operations the crossing of the Gari river was crucial. If this failed the Army would fail because in river crossings, as in landings, the assault is an all-or-nothing affair. The Gari had a bad name since the attempts to cross made by 46th Division and 36th U.S. Division in January had failed utterly. In May the plans and preparations in 13th Corps were so well considered and thorough, and so well did the troops, from divisional commanders down to private soldiers, understand their parts and play them, that 4th Division and 8th Indian Division decisively won the first vital phase of the battle. The consolidation of this success and the advance in the Liri valley must be credited to the speed and skill with which the Royal Engineers and the Indian Sappers and Miners built the bridges in most difficult conditions.

It is perhaps invidious to choose a formation for particular mention because each has its aptitudes and part of the art of command, in Field-Marshal Montgomery's words, 'lies in knowing what each division is best at, and having the right divisions in the right place at the right time'.* The French Expeditionary Corps is an exception because of its brilliant performance. This Corps was a homogeneous national contingent embodying the aspirations of France. It owed its inclusion in 5th Army to Alexander's principle of placing troops armed and equipped mainly by America in American formations. Its allotted sector in the forbidding foothills of the Aurunci mountains across the Garigliano was due to the same principle, which decided Alexander to withdraw the British 10th Corps from those positions and from 5th Army to join 8th Army. As soon as the French Corps had occupied these positions Clark wisely gave Juin his head in planning the Corps' part in the coming offensive. Almost from the day that he arrived in Italy Juin had maintained that '*les grandes unités motorisées liées aux routes n'ont pu se*

* *High Command in War* (21st Army Group, June 1945) p. 25.

Digitized by Google

déployer, donc manoeuvrer'[184] and that one of the keys for unlocking the Gustav Line lay in action on the heights by troops who were accustomed to mountains and who were properly equipped, especially with mules handled by men who understood how to use them.* The French Expeditionary Corps possessed these qualifications and gave in the Aurunci, Ausoni, and Lepini mountains a classic demonstration of mountain warfare by infantry on the heights, supported by mobile columns of armoured cars and tanks acting wherever wheels and tracks could go. The French Expeditionary Corps played an outstanding part in breaking the Gustav and Hitler Lines.

We now come to the men who planned, inspired and directed this great Allied enterprise. Of Alexander and his Chief of Staff, Harding, it can be said that they 'in a happy mood of command, made masterly dispositions'.† However these masterly dispositions would have remained on paper, an interesting matter for readers of military history to discuss, if the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces had not first defeated the German Air Force in the Mediterranean Theatre and driven it from the Italian sky.

* A French liaison officer with 5th Army reported that '*les mulets sont mal dressés, mal tenus, mal employés par du personnel inexpérimenté, les animaux ne comprenant pas l'anglais.*' Le Goyet adds '*ce n'est pas une plaisanterie*'.[185]

† William Napier wrote these words about Robert Craufurd at the battle of Busaco, 27th September 1810. Craufurd commanded the Light Brigade and then the famous Light Division in Portugal and Spain, from 1808 until January 1812 when he was killed on the glacis of Ciudad Rodrigo while commanding the troops who stormed that place.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

ALLIED STRATEGY FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE AFTER THE BATTLE FOR ROME: THE ANVIL DEBATE (OCTOBER 1943—JULY 1944)

(i)

See Maps 1 *and* 12

WHILE the Allied commanders in Italy were planning the Spring offensive and while this offensive was being waged, the men who directed the grand strategy of the war engaged in a harsh debate about the strategy for the Mediterranean Theatre. The chief figures in this debate were the British and United States Chiefs of Staff, the Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean Theatre (General Eisenhower until 8th January 1944, and then General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson), Alexander as Commander-in-Chief of Allied Armies in Italy, and the Commanders in-Chief of the Allied Naval Forces and of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces.[1] So important was the discussion that the President and the Prime Minister also took part. We shall give merely an outline of the matter because Mr. John Ehrman has written a full account in his two volumes in the Grand Strategy series of the British Official Histories of World War II.* To begin our outline we must briefly recall the strategy planned for the Mediterranean Theatre since August 1943.

At the first Quebec Conference in August 1943 the Allied leaders agreed that the principal operation in the Mediterranean Theatre would be an invasion of Italy, and they agreed also that a landing in southern France, to which the code name 'Anvil' was given, should be an auxiliary of the invasion of north-west Europe 'Overlord'. The

* John Ehrman: *Grand Strategy Volume V, August 1943—September 1944* (H.M.S.O. 1956) and *Grand Strategy Volume VI, October 1944—August 1945*, (H.M.S.O. 1956).

Digitized by Google

landing in southern France would be made at about the time that 'Overlord' was launched, and the resources which were needed to mount it would be drawn from the Mediterranean Theatre. The paramount object of the campaign in Italy and of 'Anvil' was to contain German forces which, if not contained, might be used to oppose 'Overlord'. At this early stage in planning no one expected that the campaign in Italy and 'Anvil' might compete with each other for the resources from the Mediterranean Theatre or that they might ask for resources from other theatres. The reason for this expectation was the belief of the British and American Chiefs of Staff that the Allied forces in Italy would have advanced as far as was necessary to contain the German forces, that is to the line Pisa–Rimini, well before the time came to prepare for 'Anvil'. There would then be supplies and equipment to spare in the Mediterranean Theatre and this surplus would provide for 'Anvil'. In this belief Eisenhower made two plans for 'Anvil', one after the Quebec Conference, and the other after the Conference at Teheran at the end of November 1943.

In October 1943 it became clear to Alexander and Eisenhower, although not to Churchill, Roosevelt, and the British and American Chiefs of Staff, that the campaign in Italy unhappily would not move as fast as had been hoped. Early in October Hitler changed his mind and ordered his forces in Italy to offer a prolonged defence south of Rome, and the Allies' struggle to overcome this defence continued unsuccessfully until the end of March 1944.

In January 1944 Alexander landed 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio in the hope that this outflanking manoeuvre, coupled with a continuing attack by the rest of 5th Army to break into the Liri valley, would compel the Germans to withdraw from their positions south of Rome. But the Germans defeated 5th Army's efforts to break into the Liri valley in the Cassino battles and contained 6th U.S. Corps in its beachhead at Anzio. One very awkward consequence of the containment of 6th U.S. Corps was that a large number of tank landing ships had to be used to carry supplies to the beachhead. This might not have mattered if no other demands had been made on the Mediterranean Theatre's landing ships. However when Eisenhower and Montgomery were transferred to high command in 'Overlord' they asked for and obtained a large increase in their assault forces and this increase meant that the numbers of landing ships to be used in 'Overlord' had to be increased. The extra landing ships, it appeared, could only come from the Mediterranean which was already saddled with the demands of Anzio and 'Anvil'. There was little chance of the Mediterranean Theatre being able to satisfy this triple demand, and it became evident that 'Overlord', the Italian campaign, and 'Anvil' were indeed competing with each other for

Digitized by Google

landing ships. Moreover, the campaign in Italy and 'Anvil' seemed likely, sooner or later, to compete for troops as well. The German defence south of Rome showed no sign of breaking and every Allied division in the Mediterranean Theatre, which was fit for operations, was engaged in the battles in Italy or was earmarked to engage in them. Where then could the divisions be found which would be needed for 'Anvil'? Competition for landing ships was thus joined by competition for troops.

The British Chiefs of Staff tried to escape these difficulties by recommending that 'Anvil' should be cancelled. The American Chiefs of Staff did not agree. On 26th February 1944, however, a compromise was developed to solve the problem in two ways: first, by giving the operations an order of importance; and second, by making 'Anvil' an operation which would depend upon circumstances instead of one which was to be undertaken in any circumstances.[2] The Combined Chiefs of Staff reached agreement that all Allied resources in the Mediterranean Theatre should be used for operations in Italy, and that, without prejudice to these operations, plans and preparations were to be made for amphibious assaults in the Theatre with the object of helping 'Overlord' by containing the greatest possible number of German forces. The first of these contingent and subsidiary operations would be 'Anvil'.* The situation would be reviewed on 20th March in the light of events in Italy because the Allied leaders in Washington and Whitehall and the principal commanders in the Mediterranean Theatre hoped, at the end of February, that 5th Army would break into the Liri valley by the third week in March and that this success would present them with a choice of further operations. So far, agreement was general but this happy state of affairs was not to last.

British and American views on Mediterranean strategy had differed when the invasions of Sicily and of Italy were being discussed but the differences had been reconciled.† Then in the autumn of 1943 British and American views again began to diverge.[3] On 14th October the British Chiefs of Staff told the Prime Minister of 'a feeling of uneasiness . . . that the rigidity imposed by the "Quadrant" [Quebec Conference, August 1943] decisions on our military dispositions is hampering the proper exploitation of our successes in the Mediterranean'. On 19th October the Prime Minister and his Chiefs of Staff agreed that strategy in the Mediterranean must be

* The original aim for 'Anvil' should be noted. In the event, as we will show, 'Anvil' had a diametrically opposite effect.

† See *Mediterranean and Middle East* Volume V (H.M.S.O. 1973), p. 2, 187, 191, 193, 196–7.

Digitized by Google

more flexible, and that the date of 'Overlord' should not be sacrosanct. Then, in an *aide-memoire* dated 11th November 1943 the Chiefs of Staff wrote:

> '. . . since the decisions taken at "Quadrant", there have been major developments in the situation. The Russian campaign has succeeded beyond all hope or expectations and their victorious advance continues. Italy has been knocked out of the war; and it is certainly not beyond the bounds of possibility that Turkey will come in on our side before the New Year. In these changed conditions, we feel that consideration of adjustments of, if not actual departures from, the decisions taken at "Trident" [Washington Conference, May 1943] and "Quadrant" is not only fully justified but positively essential . . .'

There is no need to multiply examples to show that the British Chiefs of Staff and the Prime Minister believed in taking opportunities wherever they appeared. Mr. Ehrman puts it well:

> 'Such a mode of warfare was pragmatic, for it must develop largely as opportunity offered; and the British placed a correspondingly high value on strategic flexibility, in preference to a rigid adherence to a long-prepared plan'.

The Americans' strategic thinking was different. Confident in their almost boundless resources, they believed in marching to their strategic goal by a series of predetermined, imposing and inflexible steps. Their strategic goal in Europe is best defined in the Combined Chiefs of Staff directive to Eisenhower dated 12th February 1944:[4]

> '2. *Task.* You will enter the continent of Europe and, in conjunction with the other United Nations, undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces. The date for entering the Continent is the month of May 1944. ["Overlord"].
> 7. The Allied Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Theatre, will conduct operations designed to assist your operation including the launching of an attack against the south of France at about the same time as "Overlord". The scope and timing of his operations will be decided by the Combined Chiefs of Staff . . .'

The American Chiefs of Staff remembered the strategic discussions which had preceded this agreed directive. It presented a clear and common sense strategy for defeating Germany. Why then alter this strategy by cancelling the offensive in the south of France as the British Chiefs of Staff recommended? The British Chiefs of Staff appeared to their American counterparts to wish to devote all the Mediterranean Theatre's resources to a campaign in Italy whose limits they had not defined. Might not the campaign in Italy grow

Digitized by Google

and grow, demanding larger and larger resources until it began to claim resources which were set apart for 'Overlord'?* It seemed to the American Chiefs of Staff that the operations aimed at the heart of Germany would be helped best by vigorous operations in Italy having a clearly defined object, say an advance to the Pisa–Rimini line, and by an attack in the south of France by a clearly defined force, say ten divisions.

On 21st March 1944 Wilson sent to the British and American Chiefs of Staff an appreciation of the state of operations in the Mediterranean which the British C.O.S. had instructed him to submit.[5] He expected that the battle in progress would result in the capture of Cassino and of a bridgehead over the River Rapido.† The next phase, to complete the breaking of the Gustav Line, and then to break the Hitler Line which lay further up the Liri valley, could not begin before 15th April because large preparations had to be made. Wilson wrote of this phase, 'I regard it as absolutely essential that we should concentrate our efforts on the battle in Italy until the bridgehead (Anzio) and the main fronts are joined. It would in fact be militarily impracticable to pursue any other course'. He did not expect to advance quickly against an enemy who would almost certainly contest every yard of ground in difficult country. He believed that 5th Army and 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio would join hands by 15th May at the earliest and that Rome might be captured within a month after. He wrote 'The effect of such a success in the early stages of "Overlord" would in my opinion be very great', and he opposed any proposal to withdraw forces, especially air forces, for other purposes until Rome had been taken. He calculated that the preparations for 'Anvil' would occupy some ten weeks from the date on which 5th Army and 6th U.S. Corps united—he would therefore not be able to launch 'Anvil' until late in July.

To summarize, Wilson thought that the possible and alternative operations after the fall of Rome would be:

(a) 'Anvil'.

(b) A further big offensive in Italy combined with an amphibious operation to turn the flank of the next German defensive line wherever in Italy that might be.

(c) Landings in the Gulf of Genoa or at the coastal end of the Po valley.

(d) A landing in Istria.

---

* 'The Mediterranean was a vacuum into which America's great military might could be drawn off until there was nothing left with which to deal the decisive blow on the Continent . . . ' General Marshall in discussion with Combined Chiefs of Staff, May 1943, quoted by Ehrman: *Grand Strategy* Volume V, p. 116.

† The battle in progress was the Third Battle of Cassino which Alexander did not call off until 23rd March.

Digitized by Google

Of these operations he preferred the further big offensive in Italy mainly because in it he would be able to concentrate all his forces on one battlefield and because he had enough assault shipping for the auxiliary amphibious operation. The great disadvantage of 'Anvil' was that the Germans would soon recognise that it must be the Allies' sole great effort and would see that they could safely concentrate against it their divisions which were already in southern France, and some from Italy where no large operations would be in progress or threatened. They would have no need to withdraw any divisions from northern France. Wilson thought that landings in the Po valley and in Istria depended upon too many unknown factors to be attractive. He therefore suggested that the Chiefs of Staff should give him a new directive: to continue the offensive in Italy when Rome had been captured; to scrap 'Anvil'; to make preparations to land in southern France in the event of a German collapse.*

By coincidence, also on 21st March, Eisenhower informed General Marshall and the British Chiefs of Staff that he believed that the campaign in Italy was bound to encroach upon the resources which must be set aside for 'Anvil', especially assault shipping.[6] He therefore believed that 'Anvil' should be cancelled and should be replaced by a simple demonstration against the south of France or the Ligurian coast, to begin five days before 'Overlord' and to continue for as long as possible. The assault shipping which would be saved by substituting a mere demonstration for 'Anvil' should be sent to the United Kingdom to take part in 'Overlord'.†

The British Chiefs of Staff at once informed their American colleagues that they agreed with Wilson's views and with Eisenhower's, although they maintained that only 19 L.S.T. could be spared from the Mediterranean. On 24th March the American Chiefs of Staff replied that they would agree to postpone 'Anvil' but not to cancel it. They thought that to advance to the Pisa–Rimini line, after the capture of Rome, with eight divisions as Wilson proposed, offered little hope of containing the German divisions which were in Italy and almost no hope of attracting German divisions from other fronts to the Mediterranean Theatre at the time of launching 'Overlord'. On the contrary they thought that the Germans would go so far as to evacuate Italy if they judged that to throw against 'Overlord' their divisions from Italy would ensure the defeat of 'Overlord'. The American Chiefs of Staff therefore proposed that the Allies should launch a powerful offensive in Italy to unite their armies with the force at Anzio. After this union they should

* The Allies always had ready at least outline plans to take advantage of a sudden German collapse, however caused, known as 'Rankin'.

† The assault shipping which Eisenhower suggested should be sent to the United Kingdom amounted to 26 L.S.T., 40 L.C.I.(L), and three other vessels.

Digitized by Google

put as much pressure upon the Germans as was possible from this new front, without necessarily advancing far from it, and should also threaten a landing in southern France before and after the 'Overlord' D day. Then they should launch 'Anvil' in earnest about 10th July. To support this strategy they offered to divert 26 L.S.T. and 40 L.C.T. from the Pacific to the Mediterranean, to arrive there in June to replace assault shipping which was to be sent from the Mediterranean to take part in 'Overlord'. This was a very remarkable offer because it was the first occasion on which the American Chiefs of Staff proposed to divert assault shipping from the Pacific to Europe, and moreover assault shipping which was earmarked for particular and important operations in the Pacific. For this reason they accompanied their offer with a condition: that the British should press on with preparations for 'Anvil' with the firm intention of launching that operation on or near 10th July.

The British Chiefs of Staff did not perceive how strongly their American colleagues felt upon this question of strategy or that the Americans believed their offer of assault shipping from their cherished Pacific Theatre was exceedingly magnanimous. From Washington the vigilant and diplomatic Field-Marshal Sir John Dill explained these matters by reporting on 29th March that:[7]

> '. . . Marshall went on to say that the U.S. Chiefs of Staff . . . would not agree to make important detachments from the Pacific just to improve the prospects of the Italian campaign. In their view, which they hold strongly, any extra effort put into the Mediterranean to assist "Overlord" must be made into France to justify the proposed diversion of landing-craft.
>
> The proposed diversion from the Pacific in favour of a delayed "Anvil" is in fact a serious one. There is in the Pacific vast superiority in U.S. naval, air and land forces. Landing craft solely is [sic] lacking to make these fully effective. Moreover, delays, which diversion to the Mediterranean would involve, often mean in the Pacific missing a dry season, and cannot therefore be measured in terms of the time it will take to replace the diverted craft . . . the U.S. Chiefs of Staff believe earnestly in the importance of "Anvil" . . . They are prepared to make a great sacrifice in the Pacific to make a delayed "Anvil" possible but they are *not* prepared to make the sacrifice for operations in Italy. To do so would in their view be a bad strategic bargain and therefore unsound'.

Unfortunately before Dill's explanations had arrived, the British Chiefs of Staff had sent to the American Chiefs of Staff, on 28th March, a telegram in which they welcomed the offer of assault shipping but jibbed at the accompanying condition. Perhaps a little airily they wrote:[8]

Digitized by Google

> 'To sum up, we agree that an assault on the South Coast of France should be postponed, not cancelled, and that plans for the July date should be pressed forward; but, in view of the various alternative courses of action open to the Germans, we do not feel able at this time to express a firm intention of mounting it for that date regardless of the conditions which may supervene between now and then. We may, indeed, find when the time comes that "Anvil" is the best card to play. Alternatively, it may pay us better to press the battle in Italy to the limit . . . It will be time enough in early June to review the whole problem and to decide which of the various plans that General Wilson has prepared best meets the situation then existing . . .'

Unfortunately this message reached the American Chiefs of Staff just after one from Wilson which said that Alexander would not be able to renew his offensive before 14th May at the earliest. The effect of the two messages on the American Chiefs of Staff was to make them feel that the British were trifling instead of seriously planning a firm programme of operations, and the Americans now insisted that a decision must be taken to begin 'Anvil' on a specific date. The British Chiefs of Staff, believing themselves to be prudently keeping options open, returned a sharp answer for Dill to pass on:

> 'We earnestly hope that the U.S. Chiefs of Staff will not maintain the attitude . . . which is, to put it baldly, that unless we accept their arguments about Mediterranean strategy there will be nothing to argue about because the extra resources will not be forthcoming . . .'

A right decision, they went on, was more important than a quick one.

On 31st March Dill replied that because the British and the Americans agreed upon so much apart from 'Anvil', the best course seemed to be to try to obtain a directive for Wilson which would embody that agreement without raising disputable strategic principles, and he asked for a draft.[9] He wrote:

> 'In preparing this directive we [the Joint Staff Mission] strongly recommend that it should order the Allied C. in C. Mediterranean to undertake . . . "Anvil" on 10th July and that preparations and plans should be pressed vigorously with this in view. He should then be told that as it is too early to be certain that the "Anvil" as planned will be the operation best calculated to assist "Overlord", plans should be sufficiently flexible to admit of alternatives . . .'

The British Chiefs of Staff then wrote a draft directive and sent it to Washington on 3rd April.[10] But the American Chiefs of Staff had become suspicious as well as offended. On 4th April they submitted amendments to the draft.[11] It is convenient to place side

Digitized by Google

by side the British and American versions of the most important passages of the draft directive:

British version	*U.S. version*
'2(a) Launch as early as practicable a . . . all out offensive to join the beachhead with the main "line" in Italy. Thereafter contain the maximum number of German formations in Central Italy through offensive action.	'Launch as early as practicable a . . . all out offensive to join the beachhead with the main "line" in Italy. Thereafter maintain pressure to contain the maximum number of German formations in Central Italy.
(b) Develop a positive amphibious threat against the Mediterranean coast of France . . . in order to delay the movement of German forces in the Mediterranean towards "Overlord".	[No change]
(c) Prepare plans for "Anvil" on at least a two-divisional assault basis to be launched at the earliest practical date. Target date 10th July.	Prepare plans and preparations [sic] for "Anvil" on at least a two-divisional assault basis to be launched at the earliest practicable date. Target date 10th July.
(d) "Anvil" is the most ambitious operation which can be undertaken in the Mediterranean, and plans for this should be pressed forward vigorously and wholeheartedly, together with all preparations which do not prejudice the operations in (a) above. The undertaking of these preparations for "Anvil" will in no way preclude a change of plan by the C.C.S. should an undeniably better course of action be presented by changing circumstances'.	"Anvil" is the most ambitious operation which can be undertaken in the Mediterranean and plans for this should be pressed forward vigorously and whole-heartedly.'

Dill and the British Chiefs of Staff had set their innocent net in the sight of the bird, and therefore in vain. The American Chiefs of Staff were determined that future offensive operations in Italy should not prejudice 'Anvil', while the British Chiefs of Staff were determined that 'Anvil' should not prejudice a free choice of future operations in Italy.

The British Chiefs of Staff refused to accept the American amendments, telegrams flew to and fro, and Dill in Washington laboured

Digitized by Google

to interpret fairly the British wishes to the Americans and the American wishes fairly to the British. But as he remarked on 7th April 'We and the Americans are still poles apart'.[12] On 8th April the American Chiefs of Staff again stated their views:[13]

> 'We do not agree with the British Chiefs of Staff on the relative importance of "Anvil" as compared to continued offensive operations in Italy. We believe the sound decision is to mount "Anvil" while maintaining strong pressure on the German forces in Italy . . .'

However:

> 'Since there is urgent need for an immediate decision we will accept the British view'.

This sounded most accommodating, but there was a sting in the tail: the American Chiefs of Staff refused to divert assault shipping from the Pacific to support what they believed to be unsound strategy in the Mediterranean.* As Dill explained on 9th April:[14]

> '. . . Marshall made it quite clear that he would not agree to landing craft being taken from the Pacific if, after the beachhead [Anzio] has been joined up, "Anvil" is to take second place to offensive action in Italy and no preparations for it are to be made which might prejudice such offensive action. He is not trying to blackmail us but feels having regard to the war effort as a whole, that these landing craft are more useful in the Pacific than in helping rather vaguely an Italian offensive which he does not believe will be of any important assistance to "Overlord" '.

Dill here made plain a most important point. This was that the dispute between the two sets of Chiefs of Staff was not merely about sixty-six assault vessels important though that might be, but about the future of the campaign in Italy.

Mr. Churchill had been following the argument, but had not intervened until 5th April when he addressed a minute to his Chiefs of Staff:[16]

> 'The campaign in the Aegean was ruined by stories of decisive battles in Italy. The decisive battles in Italy were ruined by pulling out 7 of the best divisions at the critical time. I now fear that the future campaign in Italy will be ruined by the following causes:
>
> (a) General Alexander's desolating delay.
> (b) The shadow of "Anvil", which will spoil all operations after May 14.

---

* In addition to offering assault shipping from the Pacific, the American Chiefs of Staff had caused 50 ships to be loaded with requirements for 'Anvil', and these ships were ready to sail.[15]

Digitized by Google

> We shall therefore be reduced to stalemate paralysis in Italy and building up of a tardy "Anvil". We must be very careful that for the sake of accepting the L.S.T.s from the sacred Pacific, we do not commit ourselves to the complete frittering away both of "Anvil" and the march on Rome'.*

On 10th April he told the Chiefs of Staff that he did not propose to address Marshall or the President upon the strategy for the Mediterranean Theatre until he had heard Alexander expound his plan of campaign on the 11th.[17] Alexander, as we have seen in Chapter I, convinced the Prime Minister that his projected operations were the right ones in scope and in timing.

On 12th April therefore Mr. Churchill sent a long telegram to Marshall in which he set forth arguments for keeping open the choices concerning the campaign in Italy and 'Anvil'.[18] Marshall however was not to be moved from his demand for a guaranteed 'Anvil'. On 16th April Mr. Churchill tried again but his arguments had no effect as a reply from Marshall, on 19th April, showed. Meanwhile, on 16th April, the British Chiefs of Staff had informed their American colleagues that they would sooner go without the once-proffered assault shipping rather than risk having to starve, or even break off, the main operations in Italy by diverting forces from these to 'Anvil'. But they pointed out also that if no extra assault shipping was provided, the possibility of mounting 'Anvil' in support of 'Overlord' was ended in any case. They sent a draft directive for Wilson, which the American Chiefs of Staff accepted and which was issued in the name of the Combined Chiefs of Staff on 19th April.[19] The important paragraphs read:

> '1. *Object.* To give the greatest possible assistance to "Overlord" by destroying or containing the maximum number of German formations in the Mediterranean.
> 2. *Method.* a. Launch, as early as possible, an all-out offensive in Italy.
> b. Develop the greatest possible threat to contain German forces in southern France. This threat should be fully developed by "Overlord" D minus five and fully maintained for as long as possible after D day . . .
> c. Make plans for the best possible use of the amphibious lift remaining to you [Wilson], either in support of operations in Italy, or in order to take advantage of opportunities arising in the south of France or elsewhere for the furtherance of your

* In 1943 certain land and air forces had been denied to the C-in-C. Middle East for operations against Rhodes, Cos, and Leros on the grounds that they were required for Italy. The seven divisions had been withdrawn from the Mediterranean Theatre to take part in 'Overlord'. Alexander's desolating delay was his decision to postpone his Spring offensive from 14th April, the date which, in the early days of planning, he had given for its beginning.

Digitized by Google

object, and to press forward vigorously and wholeheartedly with all preparations which do not prejudice the achievement of the fullest success in (a) above . . .'

The British seemed to have got their way for the time being. The difficulty of the discussions was that each side put forward a practicable policy and supported it with valid arguments. British and Americans agreed that Alexander should launch an offensive to unite his main forces with the 6th U.S. Corps at Anzio, but after that their views of what should be done parted company. The Americans believed that the next step and the best way of helping 'Overlord' was to launch a solid 'Anvil' of ten divisions on a definite date. Operations in Italy would then be reduced in scope. They believed that when all the claims of 'Anvil' had been satisfied Alexander would have sufficient forces left in Italy to contain Kesselring's forces. The British, on the other hand, argued that the Germans might not allow their forces to be pinned down in Italy. The German higher commanders, they considered, were intelligent enough to appreciate (if 'Anvil' were decided upon) that an amphibious operation against southern France or elsewhere was the Allies' next great Mediterranean operation and that the forces ranged against them in Italy were being weakened in order to mount it. They could then leave in Italy just sufficient forces to withstand weakened Allied pressure, and could transfer the rest where they pleased to southern France or Normandy. The best way, the British argued, to avoid this happening and to help 'Overlord' was to pursue an all-out offensive in Italy with the single-minded intention of destroying all German forces in that country. So matters stood in the third week of April, with the strategic debate between the Allies far from over.

The differences of strategic views between Washington and Whitehall were reflected at A.F.H.Q. There the senior U.S. officers like Devers, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, and Rooks, the Deputy Chief of Staff, unwaveringly supported 'Anvil'. Indeed in early May the British Secretary of the Inter-Service and Political Secretariat went so far as to warn Wilson 'that the Americans in this Headquarters have constantly sought opportunities to nullify the "all-out" in Italy policy'.*[20] On 29th May Sir John Dill, in

---

* Important officers of A.F.H.Q. who regularly attended the Supreme Allied Commander's conferences included:

American Lieutenant-General Jacob L. Devers, Deputy S.A.C.;
Major-General Lowell W. Rooks, Deputy C.O.S.

British Lieutenant-General J. A. H. Gammell, Chief of Staff;
Lieutenant-General J. G. W. Clark, Chief Administrative Officer;
Major-General K. W. D. Strong, Assistant Chief of Staff G2 [i.e. Intelligence].

Digitized by Google

Washington, privately warned Wilson about another Italian matter which reflected a general American feeling.[21] He wrote:

> 'American friends here—the best of them—are becoming concerned at what they feel to be lack of close Anglo-American co-operation in Allied Control Commission, and military muddle. Roughly the complaint is that we are treating Italy too much as a purely British sphere . . .'*

Wilson had a delicate and difficult task as Supreme Allied Commander. He took impartiality as his chief principle and has written in his memoirs that he adopted and adapted Foch's description of his service as Allied Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front in the First World War: 'I am conscious of having served England [in Wilson's case read: the United States] as I served my own country'.[23] Wilson's actions witness that he wrote truly, and that he was inclined if anything to support American, rather than British, strategic views. When he received the directive of 19th April from the Combined Chiefs of Staff he followed his principle of impartiality in his first steps to comply with it. On the one hand he ordered his Chief Administrative Officer to begin to collect everything necessary for an assault landing by three divisions at some point, as yet not chosen, in the Mediterranean Theatre in early August. On the other hand he did not try to wheedle the necessary extra assault shipping from the American Chiefs of Staff by saying that the landing would be 'Anvil'. Although such a decision would no doubt win material backing from the Americans, it would also destroy the strategic flexibility which the British Chiefs of Staff, and he himself, believed to be so important.

Wilson reported his intentions to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in telegrams dated 23rd and 29th April.[24] The coming Spring offensive in Italy would, he wrote, absorb all the formations in his Theatre except those which were maintaining internal security, and two French armoured divisions, and one newly-arrived United States division which was receiving amphibious training. He would therefore offer a threat to the south of France during the early and vulnerable stages of 'Overlord' by pretending to mount forces for an invasion at Oran and Salerno and in Corsica. Air operations to sharpen the threat were being co-ordinated with Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force as part of the general bombing plan for 'Overlord'. Help to increase the activities of the Yugoslav Partisans was being arranged.

As to amphibious operations he intended:[25]

---

* Dill also sent a warning to Sir James Grigg, the Secretary of State for War.[22]

Digitized by Google

> 'to concentrate everything on the success of "Diadem" [The Spring Offensive], and thereafter to make use of the flexibility and reserves which will be released by the junction with the bridgehead to mount such operations as may be desirable and practicable with the very limited assault lift available, according to the situation as it develops . . . It must be realised, however, that until additional resources in assault craft and shipping can be placed at my disposal, any major amphibious operation in this theatre is quite out of the question'.

Wilson went on to say that:

> 'It would be neither profitable nor wise to attempt . . . to decide on any one definite plan for adoption after the critical period of "Overlord". No one can forecast what the situation will be in three months' time [at the end of July] . . .'

The Germans might occupy another position south of Rome and Wilson would then wish to turn its flank by a sea-borne attack. Or the Germans might withdraw slowly to the Pisa–Rimini line, and again Wilson would wish to outflank them by sea or to reinforce his own Armies by sea. The opportunity might come for some kind of 'Anvil' or for operations in northern Yugoslavia [i.e. its Adriatic littoral], and in every case Wilson would need assault shipping. Experience had shown that a landing was likely to be contained in its beachhead if it were made by a smaller force than three divisions in the assault, and three more in an immediate follow-up. For an expedition of this size Wilson would require a shore-to-shore lift for 2½ divisions from sources outside his Theatre, and 150 sailings by cargo ships.* An air-lift for two-thirds of a division was also desirable.

Wilson's telegrams reached the British Chiefs of Staff at an auspicious moment because Mr. Churchill was now busily considering ways in which the Mediterranean Theatre might help 'Overlord'.[26] Among these was a plan for an Anglo-French landing at Bordeaux which he had put forward in February 1944 but had then shelved until the resources for the Mediterranean Theatre had been settled in the light of the demands of the campaign in Italy, of 'Anvil', and of 'Overlord'. Mr. Churchill now held a Staff Conference which invited the Chiefs of Staff to study the Bordeaux plan, and to inform the American Chiefs of Staff, Eisenhower, and Wilson.[27] The British Chiefs of Staff decided to summon Wilson for discussions, and told the American Chiefs of Staff that they favoured some form of 'Anvil' or of the Bordeaux plan to be launched about three weeks after the beginning of 'Overlord'. The American Chiefs of Staff

* A shore-to-shore lift means that troops and material are embarked at departure points in craft which will beach at destination.

Digitized by Google

were so pleased by what they took to be a resuscitation of British interest in an amphibious operation of the 'Anvil' type that Admiral King announced on 28th April, at a meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington, that if the British Chiefs of Staff firmly recommended an assault on southern or western France, he would endow it with one month's production of U.S. landing craft, the equivalent of the sixty-six assault ships and craft from the Pacific which the Americans had offered in March, and had cancelled in April because they disapproved of the proposed British strategy in the Mediterranean Theatre.*

Wilson discussed possible plans with the Chiefs of Staff and also consulted Eisenhower during the first week of May. A descent on the western coast of France was soon shelved. Arguments against it were the long voyage from the Mediterranean ports, the difficulty of supply, and the likelihood that only carrier-borne aircraft would at first be available to provide air support. Moreover Wilson and Eisenhower agreed that the operation could only be undertaken if Brittany were first overrun, in which case the assault could best be mounted by Eisenhower's S.H.A.E.F. Other operations were considered and discarded, and in the end Wilson was instructed to plan (to quote Mr. Ehrman's summary):[29]

> 'four possible seaborne operations inside the Mediterranean: an assault on the Gulf of Lions, probably on Sète, from which to develop operations mainly to the north-west; an assault to the east of Toulon, in the area already proposed for "Anvil", whence to develop operations mainly to the north; an assault on the Gulf of Genoa, which in the right circumstances would combine a threat to the Germans still in Italy and to those in Southern France; and an assault on the Italian coast north of Rome, possibly near Civitavecchia, if the course of the campaign demanded'.

The American Chiefs of Staff were satisfied by these proposals, and offered to send 19 L.S.T. and 19 L.C.T. to the Mediterranean to arrive between 20th June and 20th July.[30] But when at the end of May the British Chiefs of Staff sought an assurance that the Americans would still provide ancillary units and special stores which they had earlier set aside for the original 'Anvil', the American Chiefs of Staff touched the curb-rein by replying 'only if the proposed operation is restored to the priority originally given "Anvil" '.

---

* In the meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington the British Chiefs of Staff were represented as a matter of course by the principals of the British Joint Staff Mission to Washington. These officers spoke to their briefs from Whitehall, but a great deal depended upon their tact, firmness, persuasiveness, and diplomacy. Field-Marshal Sir John Dill was outstanding in these qualities and was so much liked and respected by the Americans that when in November 1944 he died, he was accorded the extraordinary distinction of burial in America's National Cemetery at Arlington.[28]

Digitized by Google

Meanwhile, on 17th May, Wilson reported to the British and the American Chiefs of Staff the results of his study of the four operations which had been proposed.[31] He believed that the largest practicable operation was to land substantial forces in southern France with a view to advancing northwards up the Rhône valley, a course favoured by S.H.A.E.F., or through the Toulouse Gap. He discarded Sète as a place suitable for a landing because the narrow channels of the port could easily be blocked, the beaches and their exits were bad, and the area was beyond the range of effective shore-based fighter cover. He therefore chose the landing-place which had been proposed for the original 'Anvil', the coast east of Toulon, and he hoped to build up the assault force to five divisions ashore by D + 10 and ten divisions by D + 90. He suggested some date between mid-August and mid-September for the landing. An early date in this period would depend upon the progress of the operations in Italy and upon the timely arrival of assault shipping. The final date could not be later than the beginning of Autumn's unsettled weather. He did not rule out small landings in Italy but put them aside. The British Chiefs of Staff approved Wilson's plans in a general way and so informed their American colleagues on 27th May.[32]

On 22nd May Wilson had sent Alexander a directive to guide him in operations north of Rome.[33] The guidance was no more than 'Your task will continue to be the destruction of German forces in Italy', and Wilson then said that he planned to mount an amphibious operation not later than mid September for which Alexander must release one U.S. division by 13th June, and another by 17th June, one French division by 24th June, and one U.S. division by 27th June. Alexander's three remaining French divisions would be called for later. On 4th and 5th June 5th Army entered Rome, and on the 5th Wilson told Alexander that the programme of withdrawals of divisions from A.A.I. would become firm if the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided that an amphibious operation would take precedence of further operations in Italy.[34] On the 7th he informed the American Chiefs of Staff that because of the success in Italy 'I can be ready to carry out an amphibious operation on the scale permitted by full use of the assault resources available to me'.[35] He aimed at 15th August as the date of operation, and asked that his deficiencies in troops and stores should be made good at once. He also asked for 100 cargo vessels which would be loaded in Mediterranean ports and for 150 sailings of stores and supplies from the U.S.A.

As the date for 'Overlord' approached the strategic debate became more flurried, judgements more varied and proposals for subsequent plans more numerous. Storm-blasts of telegrams blew across the world from every quarter: from the British Chiefs of Staff

Digitized by Google

and the Prime Minister in London; from the American Chiefs of Staff, the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the President, and the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington; from Wilson and Alexander in Italy. To the official telegrams from these sources must be added those demi-official messages which important men exchanged. 'X' would send a telegram proposing *this* which was crossed by one from 'Y' proposing *that* and one from 'Z' proposing *t'other*. Telegrams were misunderstood, explained, corrected, amended, repeated, and then misunderstood all over again. The files became steadily thicker and more numerous and it was harder and harder even to look up references. In a sense the men who directed the war, whatever their place in the hierarchy, had to master the difficulties created by means of communication that were all too good and too quick.

On 1st June the Directors of Plans of the Service Ministries informed the Chiefs of Staff that they believed that more than fifty divisions would in the end be needed for Eisenhower's campaign in France and Germany, and that the only sources of these reinforcements would be the United States and the Mediterranean Theatre.[36] They believed that the Allied forces in the Mediterranean Theatre had three possible roles, namely: to continue an all-out offensive in Italy; to undertake 'Anvil' or a similar operation; to form a strategic reserve from which Eisenhower could draw reinforcements. To undertake 'Anvil' would mean that a strategic reserve could not be formed, but if 'Anvil' were abandoned and the Allied forces in Italy were to take up a defensive position on the Pisa–Rimini line, about ten divisions would become available for operations elsewhere. The Chiefs of Staff 'took note'.*

On 5th June, directly after the 'fall' of Rome, the Prime Minister reverted to his plan for an amphibious operation on the west coast of France.[37] The main object of the operation was to capture a port where divisions, in readiness in the United States, could be disembarked to reinforce 'Overlord'. The amphibious operations would be undertaken by a force from the Mediterranean Theatre, and would be the best way in which the Theatre could help 'Overlord'. Mr. Churchill dismissed a landing in southern France because 'In fact it may be said that an action 500 miles distant [from Normandy] will not influence the main battle [in Normandy] till that main battle is decided . . .' The Chiefs of Staff agreed in principle but suggested that nothing should be done until the matter had been discussed with the United States Chiefs of Staff who were arriving in England on about 10th June for consultations on strategy

* 'Taking note' meant that something was formally brought to the notice of some official body e.g. the Chiefs of Staff Committee or the War Cabinet, or to the notice of an individual e.g. the Prime Minister. No action followed, at least for the time being.

Digitized by Google

in Europe and to see something of the battles in Normandy.[38] However the British Chiefs of Staff made an important proviso:

> 'We must not do anything which will rob General Alexander of the full fruits of his victory. This will probably mean resisting the desire . . . of the American Chiefs of Staff prematurely to withdraw troops from the Italian battle in readiness for "Anvil" on which they are still set . . .'

Alexander had voiced this fear in an informal situation report to the Prime Minister and Sir Alan Brooke on 30th May:[39]

> 'I hope our tap will not be turned off too soon as it was before and prevent us from winning the full fruits of our present advantageous position'.*

On 7th and 8th June the British Chiefs of Staff received two telegrams from the Mediterranean. In the first Wilson announced that:[40]

> '1. Owing to the success of "Diadem" [the Spring offensive] I can now say definitely that I can be ready to carry out an amphibious operation on the scale permitted by full use of the assault resources available to me.
> 2. The target date at which I am aiming is 15th August . . .'

The operation was 'Anvil'. The second telegram, dated 7th June like Wilson's, was Alexander's appreciation and plan for operations north of Rome. Alexander declared that:[41]

> 'My object is to complete the destruction of the German armed forces in Italy, and in the process to force the enemy to draw to the maximum on his reserves, whereby I shall be rendering the greatest assistance to the western invasion of which my armies are capable'.

Alexander reckoned that severe casualties during the battles since 11th May had reduced the German front-line divisions to the equivalent of six, and there were in Italy six or seven more, not of high quality, and two of which were divisions in name only.† By the time that the Germans reached the Pisa–Rimini line they would have available only about ten divisions to deploy on a position which they believed should be held by twelve divisions. And so it

---

* Alexander referred to the withdrawal of seven divisions from the Mediterranean Theatre to take part in 'Overlord'. See *Mediterranean and Middle East* Volume V, p. 192–4.

† The divisions which had not been engaged were: 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, 356th Infantry Division, 20th *Luftwaffe* Field Division, 42nd Jäger Division, 162nd Turcoman Infantry Division, 188th Reserve Mountain Division, and perhaps one unidentified division [19th *Luftwaffe* Field Division]. 162nd Turcoman Infantry Division and 188th Reserve Mountain Division were considered hardly effective fighting divisions at all by A.A.I.

Digitized by Google

seemed that the Germans would need to bring between eight and ten fresh divisions to Italy in order to provide satisfactorily for all their commitments there.

Alexander turned next to his own forces and remarked with justice:

> 'I now have two highly organised and skilful Armies capable of carrying out large scale attacks and mobile operations in the closest co-operation. Morale is irresistibly high as a result of recent successes and the whole forms one closely articulated machine capable of carrying out assaults and rapid exploitation in the most difficult terrain. Neither the Apennines nor even the Alps should prove a serious obstacle to their enthusiasm and skill'.

He wrote of the air forces:

> 'A system of co-operation between my Armies and M.A.T.A.F. has now been evolved whereby the full power of the air can be developed in support of my land operations. Any weakening of this combination would greatly decrease the value of this very powerful weapon of co-ordinated effort'.

With such admirable forces to use, Alexander estimated that he could advance to the line Perugia–Grosseto by the end of June, to Florence–Pisa during the second half of July, and that he could then prepare to attack the Pisa–Rimini line in from ten to fourteen days.

Administration presented no serious problems because he had captured the port of Civitavecchia and hoped to take Ancona in July, while the railways would be restored to working order as far as Rome by 15th July.* By 15th August or even earlier he would be able to maintain from eighteen to twenty divisions in an attack on the Pisa–Rimini line. He would need this number to enable him constantly to replace exhausted divisions and so to maintain the impetus of his attack. It would then be possible to advance to Bologna, and thereafter to seize the area Turin–Genoa as a base from which to march into France, or the area Venice–Padua as a base from which to advance into Austria.

Two courses seemed open to the Germans: either to defend the Pisa–Rimini line or to withdraw to the Alps. Because of Hitler's obsession about holding ground at any cost, Kesselring would almost certainly stand on the Pisa–Rimini line. Alexander then proposed his own plans:

---

* In fact the line Naples–Cassino–Rome opened for service on 5th July and the line Naples–Minturno–Campoleone–Rome opened on 25th July. A line connecting Anzio–Campoleone with Rome had been in operation since 29th June.[41a] *See Map 2.*

Digitized by Google

'(1) To continue the pursuit to the general line Bibbiena–Florence–Pistoia–Pisa, and over the Apennines, unless they are held in strength, with mobile and armoured formations while I reorganise and rest the remainder of my troops preparatory to an attack on the Pisa–Rimini line if required.
(2) To launch such an attack if found necessary on Bologna not later than 15th August.
(3) To establish a firm base in the Bologna–Modena area for the development of further operations westwards into France or north-eastwards into Austria according to the requirements of Allied strategy at that time. At the same time to secure and protect any airfield areas in the Po valley considered necessary for the operations of M.A.A.F.'

Alexander then pointed out that his plan would be practicable only if his armies remained intact, and if he could count on the complete support of M.A.T.A.F. He believed that his plan offered two great prospects. It would make the best use of the powerful armies and tactical air force in Italy, taking full advantage of their 'morale and momentum'. Secondly, it would compel the Germans to divert strong forces to Italy from elsewhere, or to expose themselves to the real danger of Allied inroads upon southern France or Austria during the present summer.

The difficulties of the inter-Allied command structure in the Mediterranean are illustrated by Wilson rebuking Alexander on 8th June for proposing a matter of policy directly to the Prime Minister and the C.I.G.S. instead of through him.[42] Wilson complained that Alexander put him 'in an impossible position with the Americans' and continued:

'You must remember that I am the servant of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and that the Americans are sticklers for correct channels. Further they regard direct communications between you and London with the gravest suspicion as an attempt to influence the British Chiefs of Staff by a British as opposed to an Allied expression of opinion . . .'*

On the very same day (8th June) Alexander told Sir Alan Brooke of his misgivings caused by warnings from Wilson on 5th June that some of his troops would be removed for other operations:

'I am seriously perturbed at the probability that my present successful operations are going to be hamstrung again . . . It is my duty to point out that if this [removal of troops] happens then the extremely attractive and promising plan

* Two months later Alexander was to receive a directive from Churchill, dated 28th August 1944: '. . . As Minister of Defence I give you the full right to communicate direct with me . . . '[43] It took immense tact, which Alexander possessed, to keep relations harmonious.

Digitized by Google

> outlined in my appreciation will not be practicable. It seems to me that it would be criminal to throw away such a wonderful opportunity of bringing off a really great coup'.[44]

Brooke replied at once, privately, to Alexander that nothing should be allowed to prevent the destruction of the German forces which were south of the Pisa–Rimini line, and that the policy for operations north of that line would be settled, he hoped, by the end of June.[45]

The Combined Chiefs of Staff had their first meeting in England on 11th June at Stanwell Place, Middlesex, and followed it with others.* Their discussions were curiously imprecise, possibly because there was too much uncertainty in the air. The Normandy landings had been a success in that the Allies had seized a bridgehead, but no one could foresee clearly how events were likely to develop. However, they agreed well enough to instruct General Ismay to draft a telegram setting out their views for Wilson and Eisenhower. The most important paragraphs in Ismay's draft were these:[46]

> '2. The overriding necessity is to apply to the enemy, at the earliest possible moment, all our forces in the manner best calculated to assist in the success of "Overlord".
> 3. *The destruction of the German Armed Forces in Italy must be completed.* [Our italics] There should be no withdrawal from the battle of any Allied forces that are necessary for this purpose. Nevertheless, in view of logistics, there may well be a limit to the number of divisions that can continue to be usefully employed in the Italian campaign.
> 4. The threat which is containing German forces in southern France must be fully maintained for as long as possible'.

At a meeting on 13th June however General Marshall said that:

> 'paragraph 3 was unacceptable as it stood. It indicated an advance to the Po valley. The U.S. Chiefs of Staff did not think that it should, as this would kill any hope of an amphibious operation elsewhere, and would make such an amphibious operation so subsidiary as hardly to merit any regrouping effort'.[47]

He did not believe that this paragraph represented the view which had been agreed on 11th June. A long discussion followed but at last Sir Alan Brooke suggested an amendment to which all assented as representing the agreement of 11th June.

---

* The United States Chiefs of Staff who attended were:
General George C. Marshall.
Admiral Ernest J. King.
General Henry H. Arnold, U.S. Army Air Force.

Digitized by Google

See Map 20

On 14th June the Combined Chiefs of Staff sent their views to Wilson and Eisenhower.[48] There was no change in paragraph 2 (see above) but paragraphs 3 and 4 now read:

> '3. *The destruction of the German Armed Forces in Italy south of the Pisa–Rimini line must be completed.* [Our italics] There should be no withdrawal from the battle of any Allied forces that are necessary for this purpose.
> '4. When the Pisa-Rimini line has been reached, there will be three possible courses of action open to us:
> (a) an amphibious operation against South of France;
> (b) an amphibious operation against Western France;
> (c) an amphibious operation at the head of the Adriatic . . .'

It was as yet impossible to decide which one of these operations would pay best because the profit depended on circumstances which were not yet known: the progress of 'Overlord'; the nature and result of an offensive which the Russians would soon begin, of which the Chiefs of Staff had received no other information from their secretive ally, and the effects which these events would have upon the Germans.* The common feature of the three courses was that each was an amphibious operation, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided to prepare the biggest operation that their means could afford, to be launched at the earliest possible date. They had in mind an assault by three divisions, for which the assault shipping would be provided from vessels already in the Mediterranean and those assigned to it: from those which Eisenhower could spare; and from those which the Americans could contribute. A lift for one airborne division should be provided as well. During the discussions General Arnold asked everybody to think about the best use that could be made of the 28,000 aircraft which were available for operations in Europe.† The Combined Chiefs of Staff believed that the amphibious operation should be launched on 25th July, provided that this date did not conflict with the finishing-off of the German forces south of the Pisa–Rimini line. They did not favour a landing near Marseilles because there the coast defences were strong, and a later advance up the difficult and easily defensible Rhône valley would be slow. They preferred a landing at Sète and an advance towards Bordeaux, or a landing on the west coast of

---

* The Russians advanced from the Leningrad front on 10th June. Within two months their northern flank advanced about 200 miles and their centre about 300 miles. They did not advance in the Balkans.[49]

† General Arnold obviously had in mind all Allied operational aircraft available in squadrons and reserve in the United Kingdom, Mediterranean and Middle East. An analysis of the growth of Allied air strength is given in Part II of this Volume, Chapter XII.

Digitized by Google

France with the object of capturing a big port: Bordeaux, St. Nazaire, Lorient, Brest. They asked Wilson and Eisenhower to comment urgently upon these proposals.

If now the Combined Chiefs of Staff seem to have been rushing their fences we must remember that 'Overlord' was very much in everybody's mind. The Allied build up in Normandy was, by the end of the first week of 'Overlord', visibly falling behind the planned time-table, and the invading forces had not advanced as far as had been expected. Then on 19th June a violent storm blew up in the English Channel and raged for three days: no such storm had been known there in June for over forty years.[50] The havoc caused delayed the Allied build up still further: postponed 2nd Army's operations against Caen; and gave the Germans four days grace in which to strengthen their defences and to bring forward reinforcements. How to help 'Overlord' became the dominant issue.

The United States Chiefs of Staff believed that their British colleagues had agreed to limit operations in Italy to destroying the German forces south of the Pisa–Rimini line, and that an advance into the valley of the Po was dead. The British Chiefs of Staff felt that they had kept their options open. Ismay, in sending to Mr. Churchill a copy of the amended telegram to Wilson and Eisenhower for approval, wrote: 'The telegram is, as you will see, exploratory and commits us to nothing'.[51] Thus the seeds of another misunderstanding were sown. The British leaders indeed were not all of one mind. Sir Alan Brooke had no liking for a winter campaign in the Maritime Alps in the west or in the Julian Alps in the east because the troops would have to fight winter weather and difficult terrain as well as the enemy.[52] Sir Charles Portal however believed that another 'all-out' offensive in the manner of 'Diadem' might be the best policy if the Germans offered a prolonged defence on the Pisa–Rimini line.[53] The Prime Minister agreed for the moment with the proposals which the Combined Chiefs of Staff had made to Wilson and Eisenhower on 14th June.

The strategic debate now moves from Whitehall and Washington to Wilson, Alexander and Eisenhower. The story is complicated because each commander was following almost simultaneously his own line of thought and informing everyone who was concerned by telegrams which often overlapped. A nice balance has to be struck. On the one hand over-simplification disguises its piecemeal nature which is so characteristic of the direction of war by committees and commanders far apart; and yet on the other hand to follow the discussions too closely would be tedious.

On 16th June Wilson discussed the Combined Chiefs of Staff's

Digitized by Google

proposals with senior officers at his headquarters.*[54] Wilson declared that the present operations north of Rome and the threat of an amphibious operation were succeeding admirably in keeping German forces in the Mediterranean Theatre away from 'Overlord'. It was however necessary to plan further operations for late June and early August; he thought that an advance up the Rhône valley, after a landing in southern France, would not make itself felt until Lyons was reached, and therefore would be too slow. On the other hand, a successful battle in the Po valley would open the way to an overland advance into France, or to an amphibious operation against Istria, followed by an advance into Austria. The conference saw many advantages in the Istria–Austria plan, but time was against it. The balance of argument, General Wilson felt, was in favour of the original 'Anvil', but he decided that he must also obtain the views of his field commanders.

That afternoon, therefore, Wilson sent Alexander the three courses which the Combined Chiefs of Staff had described on the 14th.[55] He pointed out a fourth course, which he thought the Combined Chiefs of Staff had overlooked, but which in fact they had discussed and almost dismissed: 'almost' because the British Chiefs of Staff believed that a choice was still open. This was to force the Pisa–Rimini line and then destroy the German forces in the valley of the Po. He asked Alexander and Cannon, Commanding General of M.A.T.A.F. to join him for a conference. Also on 16th June, Eisenhower sent to Wilson his views on the three courses proposed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.[56] He believed that Bordeaux was the only worthwhile objective in western France but also believed that the difficulties of landing on a coast exposed to the Atlantic swell and in the estuary of the thickly mined Gironde, and the difficulties of providing air support, made it unlikely that Bordeaux would be captured quickly. If the difficulties could be overcome, however, he would prefer an operation against Bordeaux to a landing in southern France. On the other hand, a landing in southern France would 'keep more Germans away from the decisive area of northern France' than would a landing at the head of the Adriatic. He thus left Wilson somewhat in the air, but nevertheless expected him to make proposals.

17th June was a busy day at Wilson's Advanced H.Q. because at 2.45 p.m. he and his senior officers conferred with Alexander,

---

* In addition to Generals Devers, Gammell and Rooks, the following were present: Admiral Sir John Cunningham, C.-in-C. Mediterranean; Lieutenant-General Ira C. Eaker, Air C.-in-C. Mediterranean; Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, Deputy Air C.-in-C.

Digitized by Google

and at 6 p.m. with Generals Marshall and Arnold who had arrived from England.*[57]

At the first meeting with Alexander, Wilson declared that the object was to inform the Combined Chiefs of Staff of how the resources of the Mediterranean Theatre could best be used to help 'Overlord'. The discussions soon went beyond this narrow definition. Wilson assumed that the German forces south of the Pisa–Rimini line would be destroyed, mentioned the three amphibious operations suggested by the Combined Chiefs of Staff on 14th June and added his (supposedly) own idea of advancing to the Po valley and then to France or Austria.[58]

> 'The one essential requirement was to prevent the Germans from reinforcing the Western front and, if possible, to induce them to withdraw troops from that front. This called for a threat to a vital area and it appeared to him that the best possible threat which could be produced by the Mediterranean Theatre was one against the Danube basin. If seriously threatened in this area the Germans might well decide to evacuate France . . .'

When could this threat be produced?

In his address Wilson clearly outsoared the modest proposal of the Combined Chiefs of Staff for a landing somewhere not yet decided by three or four divisions on 25th July, and his own acceptance of 'Anvil' at his conference on 16th June.

Alexander spoke next and explained and advocated his appreciation and plan of 7th June. He now declared himself solely in favour of an advance to the Po valley and then to the Ljubljana Gap. He believed that he could reach the neighbourhood of Florence by the end of June, and that he could then attack towards Bologna with fourteen fresh divisions against seven or eight German divisions which would be spread across a front of 120 miles. He estimated that he would reach the Po valley by the end of July, and that by the middle of August he would advance to the Ljubljana Gap with ten or twelve divisions which would capture the Gap by the end of the month. Besides these operations he would be able to mount a landing in Istria between the end of July and the middle of August, but this was in no way essential to his main design. His plan was administratively possible provided that he was able to use the ports of Leghorn, Spezia, Genoa, and Ancona. Nevertheless his plan would be practicable only if his armies and the related air forces and resources were left to him intact, and without other commitments. In his opinion a successful operation would be well

---

* The first meeting was attended by Wilson, Alexander, Devers, Cunningham, Eaker, Slessor, Gammell, Rooks, Cannon, Harding and Sir Brian Robertson.
The second meeting was attended by Wilson, Marshall, Arnold, Devers, Eaker, Slessor and Rooks.

Digitized by Google

rewarded. The Germans would have to muster from ten to fifteen divisions from outside Italy to forestall or hold his offensive. It was improbable that this number would be withdrawn from Russia, and so the Balkans and France were the most likely sources of reinforcement. If these divisions were taken from the Balkans a German collapse would result in that quarter and Germany's south-eastern flank would be exposed. If the divisions were taken from France, their removal would help 'Overlord' greatly.

Alexander's plan was ambitious, but he and Harding had thought it through in detail and presented it in hard factual terms of the force required to meet their specific time-table.[59] The deductions about the enemy were soundly based. Robertson, whose administrative knowledge and experience of administration in campaigns were unrivalled, and who never minced words if he believed a plan to be administratively unsound, supported the plan.

When Alexander had done, Eaker, Slessor, and Cannon shortly discussed the air forces' role and agreed that Alexander's operation would be the easiest to support of the three contemplated. This was because it was much simpler to deploy air forces north-eastward in Italy than it was to move them westwards to Corsica as would be necessary, for example, before 'Anvil'. Admiral Cunningham gave a warning on the naval problem. He could not assume that the ports of north Italy would be open ports, and the business of opening them and restoring them would be much slower than seemed to be expected. If the ports were not open there would be insufficient landing craft and ships to maintain A.A.I. by sea, and the shortage would be worse if an amphibious operation was to be prepared as well. Robertson then commented that no L.S.T.s would be needed for maintenance, and not many L.C.T.s for port working, and the discussion passed on.

Devers and Rooks opposed Alexander's plan.[60] They did not argue the case on the likelihood of 'Anvil' achieving its original aim of containing the maximum number of German divisions in southern France, but on the new premise of 'Overlord's' urgent need for a port in western or southern France where divisions which were waiting in the U.S.A. could be disembarked. 'Anvil' or a similar operation would pay this assured dividend much sooner than Alexander's plan would give its conjectural rewards. Rooks moreover questioned whether it would be possible to maintain 18–20 divisions north of the Pisa–Rimini line.

The meeting reached no conclusions but Wilson said that he would use what he had heard in his discussions with Marshall and Arnold.

Digitized by Google

Wilson began his discussions with Marshall and Arnold by presenting Alexander's plan and time-table.[61] He remarked that:

> 'The advantages of an overland thrust of this kind were that it kept a defeated enemy on the run, retained A.A.I. intact as a fighting machine, and involved no time interval such as would be necessary if A.A.I's forces were to be employed for other tasks. The disadvantages were that maintenance depended upon bringing ports in northern Italy into operation immediately after capture . . .'

and that the time-table might therefore be too hopeful. If an alternative were required to continuing operations in Italy, 'Anvil' was the best project because much planning for it had been done. But 'Anvil' would not affect the enemy until 7th August at earliest whereas Alexander's operation would apply uninterrupted pressure.

The talks continued in a rather rambling manner because Marshall's purpose was to inform himself on a variety of matters. He did however make two telling points. He confirmed that 'Eisenhower required an operation to clear additional French ports in order that Allied forces might be deployed in France more rapidly and on a broader front . . .' Secondly he pointed out:

> 'that the "north-east thrust" strategy depended on the assumption of strong German reactions. The Germans might well not defend the Pisa–Rimini line but might withdraw through the Alps. They had nothing to lose by so doing, since the loss of morale had already occurred, and they would be in a better position to prevent Allied penetration into Hungary. General Alexander's army would then be beating at air in the initial stages in northern Italy and would meet strong enemy opposition without any material diversion of forces from other fronts, on the Adige–Piave line'.

Marshall was plainly lukewarm about Alexander's plans. No one, it seems, said that Marshall's comment was based on a questionable assumption—that Hitler would change his habitual policies of forbidding retreats, and of keeping the war as far from Germany as was possible.

Wilson's next meeting with Marshall and Arnold was at 6 p.m. on 19th June.[62] The same officers attended and, in addition, Admiral Cunningham and Vice-Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, U.S.N.* Wilson turned first to 'Anvil' and explained that he now calculated that this operation could not begin until 15th August if he was to obey the Combined Chiefs of Staff's directive that the destruction of German

* Admiral Hewitt was Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Northwest African Waters.

Digitized by Google

forces south of the Pisa–Rimini line was to be completed first. If 'Anvil's' D day was 15th August, the time-table would then be:

D + 14 Capture of Toulon.
D + 40 Capture of Marseilles.
D + 60 Build up to ten complete divisions ashore.

Marshall remarked that Alexander must have full freedom of action until he reached the Pisa–Rimini line, and then asked what part French troops would play in 'Anvil'. Rooks answered that seven French divisions would form the follow up force because they were not trained for an assault landing; three U.S. divisions would make the assault.

Devers now made a fresh suggestion: to continue operations in Italy and to carry out 'Anvil' as well. He believed that only weak German forces faced Alexander and that it was not necessary to send a mass of divisions against them. Wilson however explained that a large reserve of fresh divisions was essential to maintain the momentum of Alexander's advance. Eaker and Slessor then declared that it would be necessary to use the whole of M.A.T.A.F. to support 'Anvil' and that it could not support two campaigns simultaneously. Cunningham interjected that he had not enough ships and craft to establish sea Lines of Communication for 'Anvil' and on both coasts of Italy. Gammell added that administrative resources, particularly bridging material, were insufficient to maintain two campaigns at once. In the face of these objections little more could be said. Wilson remarked that the Mediterranean Theatre required, and could use, all the resources that other theatres could spare. Marshall replied that Eisenhower 'was likely to agree readily to divert resources earmarked for "Overlord" to the Mediterranean—provided the main Mediterranean effort was directed into France'. The conference then closed, and Wilson drafted and despatched his reply to Eisenhower's signal of the 16th, repeating it to the British Chiefs of Staff and to the Joint Staff Mission in Washington for the American Chiefs of Staff.[63]

Marshall's information, he wrote, that a large number of divisions were waiting in America until a big port in France was captured for their disembarkation, was 'of paramount importance to the whole consideration of the strategic problem'. This fact faced 'the Combined Chiefs of Staff with a decision as to whether our strategy in the coming months is to be aimed at the defeat of Germany this year, or, while making every endeavour to defeat him [sic] this year, at ensuring his defeat in the first half of 1945 . . .' As things stood, the object was to ensure that Eisenhower's advance through France was fast and continuous. The best means of achieving this, it seemed, was for the forces in the Mediterranean Theatre to 'strike a blow which may cause the enemy to divert or withdraw divisions from

Digitized by Google

France, and at the same time face him with the prospect of defeat this year . . .' The best sort of blow was an amphibious operation at the head of the Adriatic 'aimed at presenting a threat to the enemy in a spot that he must regard as vital . . .' On the other hand if it were essential to capture another port in France, then the best operation would be 'Anvil'. He suggested that the choice lay between Alexander's plan of 7th June and the original 'Anvil', and begged for a quick decision. He used the arguments and time-tables which we have summarized a few pages earlier.

On 19th June Alexander sent a private signal to the Prime Minister and Sir Alan Brooke.[64] His own words best express his feelings:

> 'As I see it we are on the march to a great victory which has unlimited possibilities. Kesselring's 10th and 14th Armies are a beaten force but not yet eliminated from the field. The condition of his formations is one of extreme weakness in men and material and a grave state of exhaustion . . . It appears clear that the Germans will try and stand on the Pisa–Rimini line and I am praying that they will do so. By so doing they will commit their last divisions in Italy . . . If I can bring them to battle once more I can, provided my armies are left to me intact, mass such a powerful force . . . against them that a great break-through into the Po valley should not only split them in half but finally eliminate Kesselring's two Armies. There will then be nothing to stop us marching straight on to Vienna unless of course the Germans send at least ten or more fresh divisions from elsewhere to try and stop us and I understand that such an enemy course of action is just what is most required to assist our other operations. I believe we have here now the opportunity of inflicting on the German Army such a defeat that its repercussions will be unpredictable and this is an opportunity we must not miss at this critical stage of the war'.

On 23rd June Alexander sent a further signal to Sir Alan Brooke:[65]

> '. . . in order to have everything ready to go straight ahead if it is decided to back the Italian campaign I have put in motion the necessary tactical and administrative arrangements. Both Army Commanders and the heads of my various services [administrative], together with the Royal Navy and Air Force are quite happy and confident with my proposals for the breaking of the Pisa–Rimini line and the seizing of bridgeheads over the River Po with a view to further exploitation into Austria . . .'

In order to put the case more effectively Wilson decided to send General Gammell, together with Mr. Harold Macmillan, who had

Digitized by Google

been personally briefed by Alexander, to London, where they arrived on 21st June.*[66]

The Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff were greatly impressed by these proposals,[67] and on 25th June Mr. Churchill sent Wilson and Alexander an encouraging message: 'All your arguments are being 'very carefully weighed here by Chiefs of Staff and War Cabinet, and you have no need to recede from your position at present time'.[68] On 29th June Sir Alan Brooke sent further reassurance:

> '... We have represented most forcefully to the American C.O.S. the case for backing your offensive and abandoning "Anvil" in order you may not be hamstrung. Prime Minister fully supports us and has cabled President'.

On 23rd June Eisenhower sent to the Combined Chiefs of Staff his views on Wilson's proposals, and also sent them to Wilson.[69] Eisenhower declared that 'Overlord' was the decisive campaign of 1944, and that if it sank into stalemate, the world would take it as a defeat for Allied arms. It was therefore 'imperative that we concentrate our forces in direct support of the decisive area of Northern France'. Eisenhower believed that an operation by forces from the Mediterranean Theatre against a port in western France would be too late to help him. On the other hand 'Anvil', in the area of Toulon, would result in the capture of Marseilles and this would serve him, because divisions from the United States could be landed there in time to take part in decisive battles in northern France or in the Ruhr. 'Anvil', too, would at first contain a fair number of Germans in southern France. Eisenhower then brusquely dismissed the campaign in Italy and the advance to the north-east:

> 'Our forces in Italy do *not* directly threaten any area vital to the enemy who, therefore, has the initiative in deciding whether or not to withdraw out of Italy.
>
> An advance on Ljubljana and Trieste would probably contain a considerable amount of German strength but there would be no guarantee that it would divert any appreciable number of German divisions from France. Neither would it give us an additional port which could be used to assist in the deployment of divisions from the U.S., and this we believe to be one of the most important considerations. It is believed that it would have little positive effect until 1945.
>
> I therefore recommend "Anvil" . . .'

---

* Mr. Macmillan, as Minister Resident at A.F.H.Q., gave 'political assistance and advice in all affairs other than French or Turkish'. John Ehrman: *Grand Strategy* Volume V (H.M.S.O. 1956), p. 206–7.

Digitized by Google

On 24th June the American Chiefs of Staff sent to the British Chiefs of Staff their views upon the proposals which Wilson and Eisenhower had submitted.[70] They were uncompromising:

> 'General Wilson's proposal for commitment of Mediterranean resources to large scale operations in Northern Italy and into the Balkans is unacceptable to the United States Chiefs of Staff. . .'

'Anvil', they declared, was the sole means of applying Mediterranean resources to helping 'Overlord', and it must be launched on 1st August. 'Anvil', they continued:

> '(a) will provide early and maximum support for "Overlord".
> (b) will provide the additional major port required by Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force.
> (c) will put the French Forces into the battle for their homeland, and contribute to putting into the fight the battle-trained United States divisions in the Mediterranean and a larger number of the trained divisions now available in the United States.
> (d) utilizes to best advantage the air build-up in Corsica.
> (e) concentrates our Forces and puts them into battle in the decisive theatre . . .'

The American Chiefs of Staff then pointed out that only U.S. and French divisions would be used in 'Anvil', and that Wilson would have in hand ample forces to press the Germans hard beyond the Pisa–Rimini line. Furthermore they believed that, contrary to the views expressed by Eaker and Slessor at Wilson's meeting with Marshall on 19th June, that the Allied air forces in the Mediterranean were so strong that 'overwhelming air pressure can be exerted both in Italy and in the support of the "Anvil" operation . . .'

In this firm message the American Chiefs of Staff indicated very clearly their belief in the importance of the 'Anvil' plan and their disagreement with the views of their British colleagues. The capture of an additional major port had been given enhanced importance in American arguments favouring 'Anvil'. We will consider later whether 'Anvil' was successful in holding down any German divisions and to what extent Marseilles was used as a major port for disembarkation of new divisions from the United States.

The British Chiefs of Staff had no intention of accepting submissively the strategy which their American colleagues wished to impose, and on 25th June the Prime Minister entered the field. For the next eight days telegrams multiplied as each side elaborated or expressed in new words the fundamental arguments which we have summarized above. For this reason we need not follow every

Digitized by Google

word of the debate, and we note only some points which are particularly interesting.

The Prime Minister on 25th June presented to the War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff a note entitled 'Operations in the European Theatres', because he thought it right 'to put down a few points' which seemed to him to be dominant:[71]

> '. . . 2. At the present stage of the War in Europe, our overall strategic concept should be the engagement of the enemy on the largest scale with the greatest violence and continuity. In this way only shall we bring about an early collapse. Here is the prime test.
> 3. For this purpose sufficient ports must be acquired to allow the direct movement into Europe of the 30 or more American divisions which are in the United States.
> 4. In choosing points of attack, regard must be paid, first, to the strain produced upon the central power of Germany, the *O.K.W.*, and, secondly, to their tactical relation with the main enterprise and battle proceeding in Western France. The optimum is to combine both . . .
> 5. The supreme priority must naturally be accorded to the support of "Overlord" . . .'

Mr. Churchill then considered how to apply what he called his 'axioms', quoted above, to the strategy of the Mediterranean Theatre. He now dismissed a landing at Bordeaux because it would be slow to mount, and at Sète because of the naval objections. 'Anvil' then remained and Mr. Churchill wrote: 'The more I have thought about this, the more bleak and sterile it appears . . .' A landing would be followed by a long, slow march up the difficult Rhône valley, and the Germans could contain the Allies by using the five or six divisions which were immediately available in southern France, and which could be reinforced by about five others which were deployed for coast-defence and internal security.[72] 'Anvil' therefore would probably fail to attract any more German divisions beside those which were already garrisoning southern France.

On the other hand Mr. Churchill was strongly attracted by the 'project of an attack eastward across the Adriatic or/and around its shores . . .'[73]

> 'The political and strategic consequences of the capture of Trieste by the end of September would far exceed in every theatre those attendant upon the capture of Marseilles. Even if it were not possible to advance before the winter through the Ljubljana Gap into Austria, the reactions in the satellite or subjugated States are of capital importance . . . Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, the Aegean, Turkey (sic), Bulgaria and Rumania. All would be convulsed. There is no reason why a

Digitized by Google

junction should not be effected early in 1945 between the Allied armies of the Mediterranean and the advancing armies of the Soviet. This might take place in Hungary or in Austria. It would certainly ruin all the German forces cut off to the south of them and would force . . . a serious detachment of troops by *O.K.W.* This is the only way, by action from the Mediterranean, of lessening the burden upon General Eisenhower's armies . . . Whether we should ruin all hopes of eastward action and condemn ourselves to a passive role in Italy, after having broken up the fine Allied army . . . for the sake of "Anvil" with all its limitations, is indeed a grave question for His Majesty's Government and the President, with the Combined Chiefs of Staff, to decide . . .'

Mr. Churchill then summed up his thought and the points which were relevant to the Mediterranean Theatre were, after revision:[74]

'(a) Let us reinforce "Overlord" directly, to the utmost limit of landings from the west.
(b) Let us next do justice to the great opportunities of the Mediterranean Commanders, and confine ourselves at this phase to minor diversions and threats to hold the enemy around the Gulf of Lions . . .
(e) Let us resolve not to wreck one great campaign for the sake of winning the other. Both can be won'.

The Prime Minister's imagination had taken fire at the prospect of operations in one of his favourite fields: the Aegean, Greece, and the Balkans. Sir Alan Brooke noted in his diary on 24th June that 'Winston . . . had written a new paper on the policy to pursue in North Italy; he was very excited about it'.[75] Next day the Prime Minister raised the question of 'Anvil' and the Italian campaign with the President. He referred to the views of the United States Chiefs of Staff in their telegram of 24th June, and wrote, '. . . These very grave questions will immediately be examined by the British Chiefs of Staff and by the War Cabinet. I earnestly hope you will consent to hear both sides . . .'[76]

On 26th June the Chiefs of Staff met, with the Prime Minister in the chair, to discuss a reply to the American Chiefs of Staff.[77] They agreed that it might be prudent not to talk of advancing to Trieste and Vienna lest the Americans should take fright, but to make the destruction of the enemy their theme. And so, for the reasons which we have already noted, they agreed that:

'(a) We should continue to give absolute priority to the support of "Overlord" and to the exploitation of the successes which it has already attained . . .
(c) General Wilson should direct General Alexander to continue to develop the full power of his offensive in Italy with the object of engaging and destroying all German forces opposed to him.

Digitized by Google

(d) General Wilson should do everything possible to emphasize the threat of an assault on the south coast of France, and to prepare to send General Eisenhower one or more American divisions and/or all the French divisions which General Eisenhower is capable of receiving and which our shipping resources will permit us to transport'.

On the same day the Chiefs of Staff instructed Dill in Washington to speak to the United States Chiefs of Staff in this sense.

When the United States Chiefs of Staff received this information, 'it came to them as a complete shock that the agreement reached in London should be completely reversed'.[78] The Joint Staff Mission saw that a genuine misunderstanding had occurred and on 27th June hastened to explain the feelings of the Americans in the hope of pouring oil on the troubled waters. Marshall, King and Arnold had returned from London with the conviction that they and the British Chiefs of Staff had agreed that when Alexander had reached the Pisa–Rimini line there were three possible future operations: one for a landing in Western France; one for a landing at Sète; and one for a landing near Toulon ('Anvil'). They believed that the Allied forces in Italy would stand fast on the Pisa–Rimini line, and would continue to apply what pressure they could to the German forces which opposed them, but that the next big Allied operation in the Mediterranean Theatre would be 'Anvil'. Now however the British Chiefs of Staff had gone back on their agreement and once again were proposing an unlimited campaign in Italy, a mere threat against southern France and a few scraps in the shape of spare divisions for Eisenhower. The faith of the United States Chiefs of Staff in all that had occurred in London had been seriously shaken. On the same day the United States Chiefs of Staff sent a stark reply to the British:[79]

'1. The proposal of the British Chiefs of Staff to abandon "Anvil" and to concentrate on a campaign in Italy is unacceptable . . .

7. The fact that the British and United States Chiefs of Staff are apparently in complete disagreement on this matter at this particular moment when time is pressing presents a most deplorable situation. We wish you to know now, immediately, that we do not accept the statements in your paper in general with relation to the campaign in Italy as sound and as in keeping with the early termination of the war. The desire is to deploy as many United States divisions in France and as quickly as possible [sic]. A successful advance by Alexander's force in Italy does not promote this possibility . . .'

The United States Chiefs of Staff then said that they saw no reason for further discussion which would produce only delay.

Digitized by Google

The British Chiefs of Staff took advantage of the Joint Staff Mission's explanation of the attitude of the United States Chiefs of Staff only to the extent of suggesting some further arguments for use if indeed it was only misunderstanding that had led to the present impasse. But they were nevertheless as uncompromising as were the Americans, and the Prime Minister supported his advisers by again addressing the President. On 28th June he telegraphed to Mr. Roosevelt:[80]

> '1. The deadlock between our Chiefs of Staff raises most serious issues. Our first wish is to help General Eisenhower in the most speedy and effective manner. But we do not think this necessarily involves the complete ruin of all our great affairs in the Mediterranean, and we take it hard that this should be demanded of us . . .
> 3. I most earnestly beg of you to examine this matter in detail for yourself. I think the tone of the United States Chiefs of Staff is arbitrary and certainly I see no prospect of agreement on the present lines. What is to happen then? . . .'

Regarding an operation against Istria Mr. Churchill reminded the President that he (Churchill) had brought this forward, at the President's suggestion, during the Allies' conference at Teheran on 28th November 1943.

On the same day the British Chiefs of Staff sent a parallel reply to the United States Chiefs of Staff.[81] They rehearsed all the familiar arguments and added a fresh one. This was most secret Intelligence that Hitler, on 14th June, had announced his intention to hold Northern Italy and that he had ordered Kesselring to stand and fight south of the Pisa–Rimini line in order to gain time to perfect the defensive positions which were being developed in the Apennines.* This decision gave to Alexander an excellent opportunity to destroy the German forces in Italy. The Chiefs of Staff then solemnly declared 'that at present we see no prospect of being able to advise His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom on military grounds in a sense contrary from [sic] that we have set forth'. General Marshall's view of the new factor, as reported by the Joint Staff Mission, was that 'while the invaluable assistance gained from "Boniface" was appreciated, if we had taken full note of all the secret information received, probably "Overlord" itself would never have been undertaken'.[82]

On the 28th June the President replied discouragingly to the Prime Minister's first message of the 25th:[83]

---

* This information refers to the personal directive which Hitler sent to Kesselring on 14th June. See Part II Chapter IX, Section iii.

Digitized by Google

> '. . . On balance I find I must completely concur in the stand of the United States Chiefs of Staff. General Wilson's proposal for continued use of practically all the Mediterranean resources to advance into Northern Italy and from there to the north-east is not acceptable to me . . . we should consolidate our operations and not scatter them'.

On 29th June the Joint Staff Mission reported that a meeting with the United States Chiefs of Staff had been cordial but that the Americans would not give an inch because they were convinced that when the 'Anvil' forces were removed, Alexander would have enough left to him to conduct useful operations in Italy.[84]

On the same day Mr. Roosevelt replied at some length to Mr. Churchill's telegram of the 28th.[85] Once again he supported his Chiefs of Staff. He was convinced that the war in Europe 'must be based on a main effort together with closely co-ordinated supporting efforts directed at the heart of Germany'. Exploitation of 'Overlord', the 'victorious advances' in Italy, an early assault on southern France, and a Russian offensive towards the west would most surely bring about the unconditional surrender of Germany. They had worked out this strategy at Teheran, where Stalin had also classed a landing in southern France as the most important operation that the Allies could conduct in the Mediterranean Theatre.

> '. . . My interest and hopes', declared Mr. Roosevelt, 'center on defeating the Germans in front of Eisenhower and driving on into Germany, rather than on limiting this action for the purpose of staging a full major effort in Italy. I am convinced we will have sufficient forces in Italy with "Anvil" forces withdrawn to chase Kesselring north of Pisa–Rimini, and maintain heavy pressure against his Army at the very least to the extent necessary to contain his present force . . .'

Mr. Roosevelt then tore in pieces an operation in Istria. It offended, he argued, against the grand strategy which the Allies had devised to bring the war to an end. A campaign to debouch from the Ljubljana Gap into Slovenia and Hungary might drag on and on. Administrative difficulties would make it impossible to maintain more than six divisions beyond the Ljubljana Gap. He would not agree to use American troops in this venture, and the French would probably refuse to commit their troops to it. Then:

> 'Since the agreement was made at Teheran to mount an "Anvil", I cannot accept, without consultation with Stalin, any course of action which abandons this operation . . .'

and then:

Digitized by Google

> 'Now that we are fully involved in our major blow, history will never forgive us if we lost precious time and lives in indecision and debate. My dear friend, I beg you let us go ahead with our plan'.

and then, as politician to politician, Mr. Roosevelt wrote:

> 'Finally for purely political considerations over here I would never survive even a slight setback in "Overlord" if it were known that fairly large forces had been diverted to the Balkans'.

In writing this telegram the hands were Roosevelt's but the voice was that of the United States Chiefs of Staff. This inference is confirmed by the record of a meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington on 29th June at which Admiral Sir Percy Noble, General G. N. Macready, and Air Marshal Sir William Welsh of the Joint Staff Mission, represented the British Chiefs of Staff.[86] One interesting point arose. Admiral King remarked that the British Chiefs of Staffs' judgement had been affected by a political influence, in other words by the Prime Minister, who had always advocated operations from north-eastern Italy into the Balkans. Admiral Noble rightly and truly denied that the British Chiefs of Staff had been influenced in this way, but Marshall remarked that he found it difficult to accept Noble's denial. The little incident was evidence of a distasteful acerbity as was Marshall's remark that 'the views of the Commanders in the Mediterranean with regard to "Anvil" were based largely on their natural desire to keep their army and air forces in being'. This was unfair because Alexander had put forward what he believed to be the best plan and then had said that he would need the whole of his forces to execute it. Self-interest was not in his nature. Furthermore, General Mark Clark, who had been Commander (Designate) for 'Anvil' until March 1944[87], believed Alexander's plan was preferable to 'Anvil', and dubbed the eventual launching of the operation 'one of the outstanding political mistakes of the war'.[88] We will be discussing the German view of these controversial issues in their chronological sequence. Suffice it to say here that at the end of August *OKW* was paying serious attention to the possibility of an Allied thrust towards Venice–Trieste.[89]

On 30th June the British Chiefs of Staff discussed point by point the President's telegram of 29th June, and the Joint Staff Mission's summary of the meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff held on that day.[90] They met every American argument with counter-arguments, and refused to alter a word of their convictions and advice. Then they showed themselves to be military statesmen by looking at the broadest interests of Anglo-American co-operation.

Digitized by Google

On 30th June they addressed a minute to the Prime Minister in which they expressed their convictions once again. And then they wrote:

> '5. We . . . take the view that as a decision must be reached at once and it is clear that the Americans are determined on grounds other than military to carry out "Anvil", and would in the final event withdraw their troops from Italy, the only course is to defer to the President's wishes.
> 6. We feel that further discussion is useless and that if we went at once to Washington there are no new military arguments that we can put forward, nor would a reiteration of the views we have already expressed be likely to shake the Americans . . .'

Very correctly, they left it to the Prime Minister to decide this question of high policy.

On 30th June the Chiefs of Staff Committee sat, with the Prime Minister in the chair, to consider formally the minute which we have quoted.[91] No change of mind occurred and the Committee agreed that the Prime Minister would draft a message to the President, setting out the British case once more. This message, after revision, was sent on 1st July.[92] The arguments have become familiar to us but Mr. Churchill expressed British feeling with force:

> 'We are deeply grieved by your telegram [of 29th June]. There are no differences whatever between my War Cabinet colleagues and the British Chiefs of Staff. The splitting up of the campaign in the Mediterranean into two operations, neither of which can do anything decisive, is, in my humble and respectful opinion, the first major strategic and political error for which we two have to be responsible . . .'

Mr. Churchill reminded the President that at Teheran:

> 'you emphasised to me the possibilities of a move Eastward when Italy was conquered and mentioned particularly Istria . . .'

At Cairo Eisenhower had spoken of 'Anvil' with dislike and a little later Montgomery had said that 'Anvil' could not produce a tactical effect in less than ninety days which was too slow. Commanders of course could change their minds, but 'Anvil' seemed likely to become a blind alley:

> 'What can I do, Mr. President, when your Chiefs of Staff insist on casting aside our Italian offensive campaign, with all its dazzling possibilities, relieving Hitler of all his anxieties in the Po basin, (*vide* "Boniface") and when we are to see the integral life of this campaign drained off into the Rhône valley in the belief that it will in several months carry effective help to Eisenhower so far away in the North?
> If you still press upon us the directive of your Chiefs of Staff

Digitized by Google

> to withdraw so many of your forces from the Italian campaign and leave all our hopes there dashed to the ground, His Majesty's Government, on the advice of their Chiefs of Staff, must enter a solemn protest. I need scarcely say that we shall do our best to make a success of anything that is undertaken. We shall therefore forward your directive to General Wilson as soon as you let us know that there is no hope of reconsideration by your Chiefs of Staff or by yourself . . .'

The President did not relent. In his reply on 2nd July he said that he believed the right course was to begin 'Anvil' at the earliest possible date.[93]

And so, on 2nd July the Combined Chiefs of Staff sent a directive to Wilson:[94]

> '1. "Anvil" will be launched at the earliest possible date. You will use every effort to meet a target date of 15th August. You will prepare for the operation on the basis of approximately a 3-division assault; an airborne lift of a strength to be decided later, and a build-up of at least 10 divisions as soon as the resources made available to you will permit . . .
> 2. You will use all available Mediterranean resources not required for "Anvil" to carry out your present directive with regard to operations in Italy . . .'

Eisenhower was directed to give Wilson 'additional resources required for "Anvil" '. Wilson, on 5th July, expressed delight that a firm decision had been taken, and at once demanded tanks, aircraft, and other equipment.[95] On the same day he issued a directive to Alexander which we will notice later.

The decision had been taken, but Mr. Churchill was not in the mood to follow the counsel of Psalm 37: 'Leave off from wrath, and let go displeasure; fret not thyself . . .'. On 4th July he gave to the Chiefs of Staff the draft of a telegram which he proposed to send to Mr. Roosevelt.[96] A few quotations will show its nature:

> '. . . it is my hope that we may still preserve the means of trying to arrive at what is wise and right to do in the conduct of this war. It should not be supposed that the opinions of the British Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean, or General Alexander, or the British Chiefs of Staff, or His Majesty's Government have been in any way reconciled to the course upon which we have now been forced to embark . . .
>
> I feel bound, with the greatest respect and humility, to bring before you, Mr. President, the very grave dissatisfaction which exists here at the way in which the control of events is now being assumed one-sidedly, by the United States Chiefs of Staff . . .

Digitized by Google

> His [Eisenhower's] authority is quoted against us even in a theatre in which he . . . has no control. The authority of . . . General Montgomery is also invoked against us, although, no doubt out of loyalty to General Eisenhower, the opinions which he now expresses are directly contrary to those he formerly held. General Eisenhower himself has also expressed opinions contrary to those he now puts forward . . .
>
> On the other hand the opinions of the Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean, being British, are completely brushed aside . . . General Alexander, who has a record not inferior to any commander in the field in this war, is treated as a cypher. His Army and his plans are alike to be broken up. The opinions of the British Chiefs of Staff, expressed with so much care are all ignored and over-ridden . . . Thus the American view is enforced, either through the loyalty we give your Supreme Commander in Great Britain or by the American Chiefs of Staff over-riding every one of our authorities in the Mediterranean, including the Supreme Commander and the British Chiefs of Staff. This obviously cannot continue, and with the very greatest respect, I must request a further and formal discussion upon the matter. Our future affairs in the Mediterranean have been thrown into much confusion . . . It would be highly detrimental if reports of serious differences between our two countries on the conduct of the war and between you and me were to become public . . .
>
> I consider nevertheless that we are entitled to press for better and more equal treatment . . . It is, I am sure, the duty of those who bear our responsibility and of the high commands, to place themselves in reasonable and equal relationship. Otherwise it would be necessary, in particular, to devise some other machinery for conducting the war, including the separation of the commands in the Mediterranean . . .'

The Chiefs of Staff showed admirable restraint by advising Mr. Churchill not to send his telegram.[97] They pointed out that he had already presented the British case 'fully, frankly, and with great force and precision' but that nevertheless the Americans had insisted upon having their own way. There was not anything to be said or done that would make them change their minds, and

> 'A rough telegram from yourself to the President . . . would not strengthen the authority of the British Chiefs of Staff, but would probably worsen their relationship with their American colleagues . . .'

It would be better to treat 'Anvil' as settled, and 'to keep our ammunition for the next occasion on which the United States authorities thwart us'.

Mr. Churchill however was still angered and on 6th July held a Staff Conference which was attended by three Ministers—Mr.

Digitized by Google

Attlee, Mr. Eden, and Mr. Lyttelton—as well as by the Chiefs of Staff.*[98]

Mr. Churchill announced that he wished to send a telegram protesting against the recent conduct of the United States Chiefs of Staff, and demanding that no further calls were made on Alexander for forces in addition to those which were to be withdrawn for 'Anvil'. He believed that Alexander could capture Trieste by the middle of September, and he was determined to support him in every way. Sir Alan Brooke cautiously said that it would be wise not to talk about possible future American demands for troops until the Americans made them. He did not wish to put predatory ideas into their heads. Sir Andrew Cunningham said that there was a risk that the Americans might insist upon a limit being put on Alexander's operations and might then demand to have any troops which became surplus because of the limit. Sir Charles Portal thought that any sort of bargain or formal agreement about the size of forces to be maintained in Italy would be unwise and would damage the freedom to dispose forces to meet fresh circumstances. Mr. Churchill ended the meeting by saying that his telegram would tell the President that Alexander could not make firm plans unless he was certain of what resources he would have, and that the President must guarantee that these resources would be inviolable. The Conference 'took note', but Mr. Churchill sent a minute to his Chiefs of Staff as a kind of postscript. He was still greatly vexed.[99]

> 'The one thing to fight for now is a clean cut so that Alexander knows what he has and we know what we have a right to give him . . . let us at least have a chance to launch a decisive strategic stroke with what is entirely British and under British Command. I am not going to give way about this for anybody. Alexander is to have his campaign . . . I hope you realise that an intense impression must be made upon the Americans that we have been ill-treated and are furious. Do not let any smoothings or smirchings cover up this fact. After a little, we shall get together again, but if we take everything lying down, there will be no end to what will be put upon us. The Arnold, King, Marshall combination is one of the stupidest strategic teams ever seen. They are good fellows and there is no need to tell them this'.

On 8th July the Chiefs of Staff met to discuss Mr. Churchill's minute. They recognized that in Italy the British depended a good deal upon American air forces and technical troops, such as petroleum and railway engineers.[100] They knew that Alexander wished

---

* Mr. C. R. Attlee was Lord President of the Council and Deputy Prime Minister; Mr. Anthony Eden was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; Mr. Oliver Lyttelton was Minister of Production.

Digitized by Google

to keep an American army commander in Italy, and was anxious that American interest in the campaign should not be allowed to fade. The Americans had stated exactly what forces they wished to remove from Italy: and they did not wish to prevent the Allied armies in Italy from advancing beyond the Pisa–Rimini line, but they believed that the forces left to Alexander would be sufficient for the purpose. The Chiefs of Staff inferred that the American Chiefs of Staff did not intend to withdraw yet more forces from Alexander's armies. The Americans must be told bluntly that the British had not given way over 'Anvil' because they approved of the operation. The true reason was they believed that a decision about Mediterranean strategy must be taken urgently, and must not be delayed by more argument.

On 10th July Mr. Churchill met the Chiefs of Staff and discussed their advice.[101] He explained that he feared that if 'Anvil' turned out badly the Americans would want to withdraw more divisions from Italy to keep the operation going; if however 'Anvil' went well they would demand more divisions to exploit success. The Chiefs of Staff persuaded him that this form of Morton's Fork was unlikely to be used and he then accepted their views. He was moreover cheered by the orders which Wilson proposed to give to Alexander.

Wilson indeed had been brisk since receiving the decision on 'Anvil'. By 7th July he had agreed with Eisenhower that he would order his naval, army and air commanders to launch 'Anvil' on 15th August.[102] Their tasks would be to establish a beachhead east of Toulon as a base from which to capture Toulon, and then to capture Marseilles and exploit towards Lyons and Vichy. Wilson would control the operation until Eisenhower was ready to take command.

Wilson then turned to the campaign in Italy, and asked both sets of Chiefs of Staff to approve instructions which he had given to Alexander on 5th July.[103] The object of the campaign was to destroy the German forces in Italy, and Alexander would have two tasks. The first was to cross the Apennines and seize the line of the River Po in order to secure the area Leghorn–Modena–Bologna–Ravenna. The second task was to capture the line Brescia–Verona–Padua–Venice. Further operations would then be determined by whatever strategic situation might exist. To offset the loss of the 'Anvil' forces, Wilson then asked for any British formations which were available, for two U.S. divisions, for bridging equipment, and for not less than six squadrons of medium bombers and six of fighter-bombers. On 12th July the British Chiefs of Staff sent to the American Chiefs of Staff their comments on Wilson's instructions.[104] They began by saying, against the advice of the Joint Staff Mission, that

> 'neither H.M.G. nor the British Chiefs of Staff consider that operation "Anvil" is our correct strategy. The only reason

Digitized by Google

> why we gave way to the views of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff in this manner was because we did not wish them to think that we were trying to gain our point by delaying tactics . . .'[105]

(The United States Chiefs of Staff 'took note' without emotion).

The British Chiefs of Staff then approved Wilson's proposals and said that they would look into the matters of providing British formations and bridging equipment.[106] They suggested that U.S. divisions should be sent to the Mediterranean Theatre only if they could not be used in 'Overlord'. They suggested that Eisenhower should be asked for the few squadrons of aircraft although they hoped that they might be able to produce four squadrons of light bombers and five squadrons of fighters from elsewhere. On 24th July the United States Chiefs of Staff replied.[107] They agreed that Wilson and Alexander should continue an all-out offensive in Italy with the forces which would remain to them after subtraction of those which were needed for 'Anvil'. If operations at the expense of 'Anvil' or 'Overlord' were contemplated, such operations were banned. They agreed with the suggestions of the British Chiefs of Staff about providing U.S. divisions for the Mediterranean Theatre, and said that Wilson should ask Eisenhower for the squadrons of aircraft which he wished to have. On 1st August the name 'Anvil' was changed to 'Dragoon' in the interests of greater secrecy.[108]

On 2nd July the President had ended his telegram to the Prime Minister with the words 'I honestly believe that God will be with us as he was in "Overlord", and in Italy and North Africa . . .'[109] It is unlikely that the President would have agreed with Milton that God's manner is to reveal his purpose 'first to his Englishmen'. More probably he thought, like Voltaire, '*On dit que Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons*'. In the dispute about strategy for the Mediterranean the most powerful argument of the United States Chiefs of Staff was that they possessed the big battalions. They did not say so openly, but made the point clearly enough in their offers of resources if their plans were accepted and in their withdrawals of the offers when the British Chiefs of Staff dissented. Like practical men the British Chiefs of Staff recognized that in 1944 the Americans were the stronger partner in the alliance, and gave way to their wishes. An open quarrel would have been at best a sorry business, and at worst a severe injury to the Allied cause. In his memoirs Alexander has called his proposed advance to Vienna a dazzling idea. The idea perished and Alexander wrote its epitaph in these words:[110]

> 'So faded the last hope of a spectacular development of the campaign in Italy. I am thoroughly aware that it had taken us

Digitized by Google

> ten months to push forward three hundred and fifty miles from Salerno to Rimini and Florence, and that Vienna lay twice that distance ahead. Nevertheless . . . I shall always believe that the Allied Armies in Italy would have gone forward with a new impetus at the prospect of a wider victory'.

The debate on 'Anvil' had ended most unpleasantly. The views of the United States Chiefs of Staff and of the British Chiefs of Staff on the correct strategy for the Italian campaign and for the Mediterranean Theatre differed irreconcilably. The President and the Prime Minister each supported his own Chiefs of Staff, and when the American view prevailed Mr. Churchill protested in the name of His Majesty's Government. He was ready to carry his protest to the lengths of discussing with the President a change in the method of conducting the war through the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and of dissolving the unified high command in the Mediterranean Theatre which had been created at the Cairo Conference in December 1943.* Anglo-American relations were certainly strained in July 1944.

At this point it is interesting to cross to the German side of the hill and to take a sweeping glance at what was passing there. We will return to assess the 'Anvil' decision after we have told the story of 'Dragoon' in Chapter XII.

(ii)

In relation to the final outcome of the War and the fate of the Third Reich, the affairs of the Mediterranean Theatre in the summer of 1944 weighed lightly in the German scales when balanced against the invasion of Normandy, operations on the Eastern Front, and the shock waves which followed the failure of the plot to assassinate Hitler on 20th July. These stories are not re-told here, but to keep our account of German reactions to 'Anvil' in perspective it is well to remember that when Hitler reviewed the war situation on 31st July he announced that stabilisation of the Eastern Front was his main concern, for on this hinged the future attitudes of all the Balkan States to Germany.[111]

The Führer was right to assume that the progress of the current Soviet advance would increase the unease of his already nervous satellites. On 10th June the Russians had attacked the Karelian isthmus in the North as a prelude to a major offensive which opened in White Russia on the 23rd.[112] Within two months this drive had destroyed some twenty-five German divisions, and had brought

* See *The Mediterranean and Middle East* Volume V, p. 574–6.

Digitized by Google

the Red Army half way across Poland, as well as deep into the Baltic States. In August the Germans managed temporarily to check the advance, but the extent of the breach in the Eastern Front, plus Anglo-American progress in the West, caused one country after another to seek political re-insurance. This did not happen all at once (and in the notable case of Hungary was prevented by the Germans) but by the end of August Hitler no longer had a tacitly subservient empire in the eastern Balkans.

The cessation of hostilities in Rumania, together with the deposition of the dictator Antonescu, was announced by King Michael on 23rd August, and came as a shock to the German High Command, which had disregarded many local warnings. German arrangements to safeguard oil transports and to drive back the Russians on the southern front were thrown into disarray.[113] Three days later Bulgaria proclaimed a 'complete neutrality' which was ignored by the Russians, but Bulgarian defection albeit less damaging to the German economy than Rumanian, exposed the entire eastern flank of *OB Südost* from the Danube down to the Aegean. In the face of these upheavals Hitler directed on 26th August that it was the primary task of von Weichs to retain control of the resources of the central Balkans, and to keep open his Lines of Communication.[114]

Prior to this redefinition of German strategy in the south-east, von Weichs had been struggling, in Yugoslavia and in Greece, with problems that would later embarrass the Western Allies. In northern Greece his forces were continually harried by Communist groups (*E.L.A.S.*), and in July and August by nationalist brigades commanded by General Zervas. The German counter-strikes which were planned and mounted did not achieve much as the Greek bands usually managed to slip away.[115] Moreover they drew in German reserves whose committal was only sanctioned by *OKW* because Hitler accepted von Weichs' argument (advanced on 12th July) that the activities of the Greek insurgents might presage active intervention by the Western Powers.[116] At the same time, the German High Command acknowledged the need for a fresh initiative against the Partisans in Yugoslavia. Following the attack on Tito's headquarters at Drvar, to which we refer in Chapter VII, the Partisans had been fairly quiescent in June. *OKW* however expected them to resume their attempts to break into Serbia, and in July agreed with von Weichs that these attempts must be foiled by an enveloping counter-attack staged, *inter alia*, by 1st Mountain Division, his most valuable formation.[117] Movement difficulties delayed the attack until 12th August, and although it made some initial progress it was soon overtaken and robbed of impetus by the developments of the Rumanian and Bulgarian crises. Neither in Greece nor in Yugoslavia did the Germans gain the upper hand

Digitized by Google

over their indigenous enemies. von Weichs acknowledged, somewhat belatedly, that his failure to supress Tito's partisans was due to the German commanders' persistent belief that they were fighting mere guerillas rather than an army which was, for the most part, well-equipped, well-led and devoted to its cause.[118]

Although the Germans were not yet speculating, as they were to do in September, on the possibility of a Russian drive towards the Aegean or the Dardanelles, they tried hard to elucidate the Western Allies' 'Grand Design' for the Mediterranean Theatre which they assumed must exist.[119] They were particularly anxious to determine the probable timings and objectives of any landing operations which the 'Grand Design' might require. Given the conflicts within the Allied camp, which we have described, a measure of German perplexity was understandable enough, but there were additional reasons for the uncertainties which persisted in their minds until 'Anvil/Dragoon' was launched on 15th August. Forced by Hitler's system to work in separate and competitive compartments, the Intelligence services which fed the High Command had no common voice.* For the European Theatres, evaluation was, at any rate in theory, undertaken by the Operations Branch at *OKW*. The conclusions reached by this Staff might or might not accord with those reached independently by Theatre Commanders, and whether any of them would be heeded by Hitler was unpredictable.

Working on evidence which was often flimsy, or false because it had been planted, *FHW* tended to credit the Allies in the Mediterranean with more divisions than they had, and with sufficient resources and equipment for staging landing operations whenever and wherever they might please. Among the Theatre Commanders, Kesselring was, as we have seen, especially sensitive to such threats. Operations Branch received from *OB Südwest* and redisseminated estimates which attributed an unrealistic number of options to the Allies. It is only fair to point out that the German Intelligence Staffs were hamstrung by lack of corroborative evidence from air reconnaissance and photography which was seldom available to those who were 'watching' the Mediterranean at this time. On 7th August the War Diary of the German Naval Staff recorded that the

* Each of the Service headquarters maintained its own Intelligence section, subdivided at *OKH* into Foreign Armies East for the Eastern Front and Foreign Armies West (FHW) for Europe.[120] The reports of *FHW* were based on signals Intelligence, radio and telephone intercepts, interrogation of prisoners, captured documents, field situation reports and reports from agents, plus the results of air and naval reconnaissance when available. They were transmitted to the Operations Branch at *OKW*, which had its own sub-section for evaluation of the Intelligence material it received. This was set up in 1943, and expanded in early 1944, after Canaris fell from grace and Operations Branch acquired responsibility for certain branches of the *Abwehr*, others being transferred to the control of Himmler and the Reich Security Organization (*RSHA*).

Digitized by Google

fuel situation of the *Luftwaffe* was so serious that while Ajaccio in Corsica and certain named ports on Italy's eastern seaboard might be photographed approximately once a week, the harbours of Naples, Sicily, Malta and North Africa could only be surveyed about once a month.[121] Furthermore, the Allies' dominance of the Mediterranean skies meant that their bombers could pay equal attention to southern France and to northern Italy, so that their bombing patterns gave few clues pointing to 'Anvil's' target area.

Other misjudgements were caused by the German High Command's belief that, whatever the Allies' 'Grand Design' for the Mediterranean might be, it would be implemented by a large body of reserves held ready for the purpose and was unlikely to be restricted to anything as mundane as 'squeezing out the (Italian) boot from the heel up'.[122] So when the forces assumed to be assembled in North Africa were not sent to southern France, as was expected at the time of the 'Overlord' landings, the field for speculation widened. No significant build up of shipping had as yet been detected in those ports which could be reconnoitred from the air. Foreign Armies West (*FHW*) warned, therefore, on 19th June that the present wealth of rumours about landing operations could be Allied-inspired, but each was relayed none the less. The wheat was not sifted from chaff; for example, a report on 10th June that part of the French Expeditionary Corps had been removed from the Italian front for rest and refit, as a possible preparation for operations in southern France, jostled *FHW's* inference from the alleged arrival in Taranto from Egypt of the headquarters of a new (and fictitious) 3rd Polish Corps that the Allies were assembling forces in Apulia to strike across the Adriatic at Albania or the Epirus.[123] The trans-Adriatic hare thus started was not run for long. In a mid-June assessment of Allied intentions for the south-east *OKW* Operations Branch reckoned that a large-scale seaborne assault on the western Balkans was improbable for political reasons. An invasion of Istria, on the other hand, was deemed to offer strategic enticements of a high order, and, although no active preparations were as yet in evidence, *OKW* continued to keep Istria within its sights for some months, with effects on the deployment of Kesselring's reserves which we shall note later.[124]

A more immediate target for landings seemed to be the north-western seaboard of Italy which had been within *OKW's* sights since the spring, when fears for landings at Genoa or Leghorn were, as we have seen, fostered by the deception plan for 'Diadem'. They were later boosted by the Allies' seizure of Elba (see Chapter IX) in mid-June, which led Kesselring to appreciate on 18th June that the Allies had enough forces at their disposal on Corsica and the southern mainland of Italy to mount an operation against Leghorn

Digitized by Google

to cut his Army Group's L. of C., while leaving reserves in North Africa intact for a separate landing at Genoa, or for landings in southern France.[125] By 26th June *FHW* had noticed that 91st U.S. Division had moved to Italy from North Africa, and on the 30th it decided that the 'African Group' must be part of the Allies' 'war of nerves'. Only if the Allies came to believe that the 'African Group's' threat was failing to pin down German forces in southern France would they translate the threat into action, and land.

In the course of July the evidence of preparations for such a translation began to accumulate, and on the 30th of that month von Kluge (then *OB West*) wrote: 'In terms of manpower, shipping and the deployment of air effectives, it can be reckoned that the pre-requisites for a large-scale landing operation [in the Mediterranean] have been met.'* In adding that '. . . Evidence for the objective is lacking. It could equally well be the French Mediterranean coast or the Genoa area . . .' von Kluge neatly condensed another month of speculation.[127] Comment on the preparations (as distinct from what they might portend) included the German Naval Staff's appreciation of 15th July that the Allies now had in the Mediterranean a total of 600,000 G.R.T. of merchant shipping, plus a possible dozen of aircraft carriers and landing craft amounting to 90% of the total held in 1943.[128] Air reconnaissance, which was admittedly insufficient, had noted a number of warships in North African ports, and in another study, of 26th July, Naval Intelligence drew attention to the high proportion of French vessels among them.† It suggested that the Allies had collected within the western Mediterranean enough landing ships and craft to carry seven divisions. The G.A.F. Intelligence Staff pointed out that Corsica was developing into a powerful base which was being reinforced with American aircraft and control stations from Italy.[130] As July's bombing activities ranged from raids on French ports such as Toulon and Marseilles to attacks on rail communications in northern Italy and the destruction of the Po bridges, G.A.F. Intelligence left open the objective of the build up on

---

* Displeased with von Rundstedt's performance as *OB West*, Hitler replaced him by von Kluge at the beginning of July 1944. The latter was however implicated in the Plot of 20th July and around 19th August he committed suicide, having two days earlier been relieved of his command by Field-Marshal Model. As Model could not turn the military tide his Theatre Command was short-lived, and von Rundstedt was back in the saddle as *OB West* by 5th September.[126]

† The more important French warships which took part in 'Anvil/Dragoon' were:

Battleships	1
Cruisers	5
Destroyers and escort vessels	19
Minesweepers	6

Seven British and two United States escort carriers were engaged. Seven French divisions and four United States divisions were the principal land forces. The main ports used in mounting the operation were Naples, Taranto, Palermo, Malta, Oran.

Digitized by Google

Corsica. By 7th August it was favouring landings in western Italy, but on 30th July Naval Intelligence argued that an invasion of southern France would bring greater strategic rewards to the Allies. If, as was expected, French divisions preponderated in this operation, they would be fighting in and for their homeland, and, in addition to pinning down German forces, a subsequent advance into the interior could arouse the local population in southern France.

While these naval assessments were getting close to the real answer, *FHW* continued to veer from one estimate to another. Pointers to southern France were provided by reports that the French divisions, hitherto engaged on the Italian front, had been extracted from it one by one, and by the frequency with which Allied aircraft appeared over the general area of Toulon.[131] The suspicion that this might be a secondary target arose after *FHW* received news from a 'particularly reliable' source on 24th July that the Allies were planning to move the British 14th Corps, which included 42nd and 57th Divisions, from North Africa to Italy. As this was the last British formation thought to be left in North Africa, its transfer to Italy suggested that the Allies might be planning a fresh offensive in order to reach the Po valley, followed perhaps by exploitation north-eastwards in very much the same way as Alexander was in fact proposing. A diversion might be made in Greece, and the French formations in Africa and Corsica (which *FHW* thought numbered eleven) could still be earmarked for southern France, albeit at some later stage. *FHW* did, however, discard a report which reached it on 23rd July, because it was too much at odds with observed preparations, to the effect that at a recent meeting of Anglo-American leaders it had been decided to shelve their plans for southern France *sine die*, as the principal Allied effort in the Mediterranean would now be made in Italy. The idea was none the less implanted that a landing at Genoa could take precedence in Allied plans over southern France. This supposition was revived in early August after 'local agents' had obligingly confirmed the transfer of 14th Corps.[132] In accepting this information as confirmation of 14th Corps' movements, *FHW* was swallowing part of the Allied deception plan. No British 14th Corps existed in the Mediterranean Theatre; 42nd Division had been a T.A. infantry division, converted into an armoured division after Dunkirk and disbanded in England in October 1943; 57th Division was entirely fictitious, 'formed' in North Africa in November 1943 and 'disbanded' at the end of July 1944.[133]

At *OKW*, the assumption that Italy was at the strategic centre of the Allies' 'Grand Design' for the Mediterranean formed the basis for a directive sent jointly to *OB Südwest* and *OB Südost* on 26th July, which redefined German policies in the northern Adriatic and

Digitized by Google

provided for the reinforcement of Istria.[134] At this time Kesselring was himself more concerned for his western seaboard, as he made clear in an appreciation sent to Operations Branch and *FHW* on 31st July. He therein reckoned that 21 Allied divisions were currently in or near the front line in Italy, plus several armoured units of or below brigade strength. In rear, he placed near Naples a concentration of eight divisions (one of them armoured) which was presumably under command of U.S. 7th Army, although agents' reports were to hand which indicated that the H.Q. of U.S. 5th Army was also in Naples. Three to four divisions, some of them Polish, were thought to be in Apulia and earmarked perhaps for outflanking landing operations between Ravenna–Rimini. In view of the greater strength and battle experience of the Naples Group, and the westwards list of the Allies' naval and air units, Kesselring felt that his Adriatic coastline was less immediately threatened than was the coast at and south-east of Genoa. A landing here could be home-based, involving only divisions which were already in Italy, or it could, if the Allies decided to draw on the reserves in North Africa and on the islands (put by Kesselring at 18 divisions in all, of which 13 were in Africa and one airborne and four infantry formations were in Sicily and Corsica) develop into a major operation of strategic proportions. In the latter case, it would have the aim of achieving a break through into Lombardy and thus cracking the Green (Gothic) Line from the rear, with additional enticements such as the cutting of Army Group C's communications with France and fomenting unrest throughout northern Italy. Having admitted that southern France was equally menaced by the Allied build up in the western Mediterranean, and that it was not certain which way the Naples Group would jump, Kesselring concluded that he must none the less be prepared for sea or airborne landing operations on the Ligurian coast, as well as for a fresh assault on his southern land front.

Within *OB Südwest's* Theatre, Kesselring's conclusion led to the formulation of contingency plans for countering landings on both the western and eastern coasts. On 10th August Kesselring addressed another appreciation to *OKW*, in which the Allies' options were still left open although attention was drawn to the portents which favoured Liguria.[135] On this occasion, *OB Südwest* did not pursue strategic arguments, but he did inform the High Command of various tactical measures which were being taken or planned; these included the movement towards Genoa of 90th Panzer Grenadier Division, the placing on anti-invasion stand-by of parts of 15th Panzer Grenadier and 1st Parachute Divisions, and the transfer to Liguria of three batteries of mobile A.A. artillery.

No analogous measures were taken to reinforce southern France.

Digitized by Google

In view of developments in Normandy where the Allies had broken out of their beachhead in early August, the German High Command was bound to give priority to Rommel's Army Group B. Some resultant impoverishment of Army Group G (General von Blaskowitz) in the south was inevitable. By 12th August *OB West* was urging that the brakes be applied, but this was due more to pragmatic evidence of landing preparations than to finite Intelligence assessments.[136] The latter remained uncertain in tone. In early August *FHW* was further perplexed by a spate of rumours and reports concerning the setting up of a French Expeditionary Corps in the United Kingdom, and its possible absorption of various French divisions haphazardly identified in Taranto. With southern France thus conceivably demoted, the alternative prospect of landings in Liguria was kept alive by rumours that U.S. 5th Army was about to leave the Italian front, and by the attention paid by the Allied air forces to airfields and other targets in northern Italy. *FHW* havered between the options, and in its last appreciation made before the landings took place announced on 12th August that positive indications of their objective and start-date were still lacking. Preparations were assumed to be complete, and *FHW* suggested that the operation would initially be mounted from Corsica and Naples by some 12–13 large formations, which might be joined by three French divisions from North Africa.

More positive views were naturally held in southern France. On 11th August the Allied air forces, which had hitherto been ravaging German communications and knocking out the bridges over the Rhône and the Var, systematically attacked radar installations and gun sites east of the Rhône. This was a clear declaration to von Blaskowitz of intent to land between the Rhône and the Var, and after two convoys of 75 to 100 ships had been sighted on course for Ajaccio early on 12th August, Army Group G was placed on full alert for the landings which, it was rumoured throughout Provence, would come on the 15th.[137]

In the light of the attacks on radar installations and of the build up of shipping in Corsica, Naval Intelligence reckoned on 13th August that an invasion of the French Riviera coast was 'most probable'.[138] Air photography revealed on this date that the port of Ajaccio held about 105 medium and small landing craft, 19 small freighters and three destroyers, plus 35 newly-arrived MTBs and a monitor; one destroyer, 33 MTBs and two coastal vessels were sighted in Calvi. Kesselring for his part conceded, when reporting to *OKW* on the 13th, the likelihood of an imminent operation against southern France, but he also made the point that this need not necessarily claim all the Allies' resources in the Mediterranean. He calculated that these waters held some 850,000 G.R.T. of merchant

Digitized by Google

shipping, plus considerable numbers of L.S.T., L.C.T., and L.C.I., the whereabouts of which were obscure, and so he concluded that the coastline of Liguria was still threatened. Allied MTBs helped to maintain this belief by operating in small groups south of Genoa during the night of 13th/14th. A sea fog that night and a low mist, which hampered further air reconnaissance of Ajaccio, helped as well. The Intelligence fog which had hung over Naples since it was last photographed on 23rd July also persisted, and was only slightly lifted by an agent's report of 11th August to the effect that it held as few as four cruisers and 14 destroyers. Nevertheless Kesselring was taking no chances, and having already placed 90th Panzer Grenadier Division under the tactical command of Graziani's Army of Liguria, he began on 12th August to shift additional reserves of infantry and tanks nearer to this flank.*[139]

Whether *AOK 19* might have been reinforced from Italy if *OB Südwest* had been less insistent for the threat to his own theatre can only be for conjecture. At Hitler's level, where decisions to transfer forces between Army Groups were customarily taken, it does not seem that the prospect of landings in southern France was a potent factor. Although daily bombarded with instructions for Army Group B, von Kluge as *OB West* was without orders for his Mediterranean front until he asked, on 13th August, how he should conduct operations there in the event of an invasion. Early on the 14th he received personally from Hitler a further sheaf of detailed orders for Army Group B, followed by the terse mandate that *AOK 19* was to 'defend the coast against landings'.[141] All further orders would be contingent on the course of the battle for Alençon (the destruction of *AOK 7* in the Falaise pocket).

At 1 a.m. on 15th August *AOK 19* was informed by *OB West* that its task was to defend the Mediterranean coast with every means in its power, and at 8.40 a.m. the Naval Group West reported that after a heavy air and sea bombardment Allied troops had gone ashore east of St. Raphaël around 7 a.m. In so doing, they did not end German speculation regarding their enemies' 'Grand Design' for the Mediterranean, but between June and August the very

---

* The Army of Liguria, which on 1st August came officially into being under command of Marshal Rodolfo Graziani (Mussolini's Minister of War since September 1943) consisted at that stage of the German 34th Infantry and 42nd Jäger Divisions, plus two Italian divisions which had been trained and raised in Germany from servicemen interned after the surrender of Italy.[140] Graziani (who, as an Army Commander, took his orders from *OB Südwest* and to whom was assigned a German Chief of Staff) was subsequently praised by von Vietinghoff for his efforts to raise the morale and combat-value of his Italian units. Initially, however, both were low and it was not until the late autumn of 1944 that the Germans reluctantly began to use Italian troops on the Apennine front of *AOK 14*. Until then, they performed coast-watching and garrison duties in Liguria. Kesselring's pre-'Anvil' anxieties for landings near Genoa caused him to reinforce Graziani's German component, and as we shall see in Chapter XII, additional German divisions were later required to defend the Franco–Italian frontier.

Digitized by Google

number and variety of the questions which were asked and left open helped to ensure that 'Anvil/Dragoon' was given an extremely favourable start.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

THE WAR AT SEA (APRIL TO JUNE 1944): AND A GLANCE AT YUGOSLAVIA

(i)

See Maps 12 *and* 20

THE long debate upon the strategy for the armies and air forces in Italy, and the decision which was taken, did not for some time affect movements by sea in the Mediterranean.[1] During April, May and June 1944 the usual six ocean convoys in each month—three from the United States and three from the United Kingdom—passed eastbound through the Straits of Gibraltar. These eighteen convoys contained some 900 merchant vessels of which about three-quarters, including tankers, came in the convoys from America (UGS) and one quarter in the convoys from the United Kingdom (KMS). During the 2,000 mile, ten days' passage through the Mediterranean, ships were detached to, and joined from, various ports, for example Oran, Algiers, Tunis, Malta, and Augusta in particular. Augusta was the port of assembly for ships bound for Naples and for ports in the Heel of Italy. From these eastbound convoys more than 500 ships arrived at Alexandria or Port Said, and of these about 350 passed on through the Suez Canal, bound for the most part for Abadan and for ports in India. During the same three months the nuclei of westbound ocean convoys (GUS for the United States, MKS for the United Kingdom), numbering 456 merchant ships to begin with, were formed between Alexandria and Port Said. When a large number of ships had been detached to Mediterranean ports, and others had joined from them, about 800 passed out into the Atlantic. Besides these ocean convoys there was a series known as Fast United Kingdom convoys to and from the Mediterranean (outward KMF, homeward MKF) which usually carried troops. As a rule one of these convoys sailed outward and one homeward during each month. The corresponding Fast American convoys (UGF and GUF) ran to Casablanca on the Atlantic seaboard of Morocco.

Digitized by Google

After a time German Intelligence staffs had come to think that ocean convoys, one eastbound and one westbound, could be expected to pass Cape Bon in Tunisia about every five days. These convoys were the largest and most important targets that the German Air Force and the U-boats could hope for and, as will be seen, the enemy concentrated upon attacking them. Besides the ocean convoys there were 'local' convoys inside the Mediterranean, for example between Alexandria and Italy; between Alexandria, Tripoli and Gibraltar; between Naples and North African ports; between Algiers and Corsica. In each case the convoys ran in both directions.

During April, May and June 1944 Naples and its satellite ports received 1,500,000 tons of cargo and 33,000 vehicles. Naples, with proper pride, claimed a red letter day on 20th April when the port handled a record 33,142 tons of cargo and 4,433 tons of vehicles in twenty-four hours. During the same three months the Heel ports of Bari, Brindisi, Taranto, and Barletta received 796,000 tons of cargo. Most of this tonnage was landed at Bari.

During April and May German aircraft sank one American destroyer, and four merchant ships totalling 22,628 Gross Registered Tonnage; and U-boats sank three merchant ships totalling 21,533 G.R.T. Five of these seven merchant ships were in ocean convoys, one in a convoy from a Heel port to Augusta, and one in a convoy from Corsica to Algiers. These losses very roughly represented a rate of less than one sinking in four hundred sailings. No Allied ships were sunk during June, but the Swedish *Fenja* (2,037 G.R.T.) was sunk, presumably by a mine, off the Turkish coast. The Allied sea Lines of Communication in the Mediterranean worked well and on the whole safely during 1944.

All German air attacks on Mediterranean convoys during April, May and June 1944 came from airfields in southern and western France, and the airfields which were used and the aircraft on them on 10th May are listed in the footnote as an illustration.*[2]

---

*

Airfield	*Aircraft*	*Strength*	*Serviceable*
Istres, Montpellier, Orange, Valence	Torpedo-bomber Ju. 88	99	80
Lezignan	Torpedo-bomber Do. 217†	8	7
Toulouse	Torpedo-bomber He. 177†	18	12
St. Martin (Cher)	Long Range Recce Ju. 88 and 188	9	4
Cazaux (near Bordeaux)	Long Range Fighter Ju. 88	18	10
	Total	152	113

†Capable of carrying radio-controlled free-falling and glider-bombs.

Digitized by Google

Four attacks were delivered in April and two in May, but in June the German anti-shipping air forces were sent northwards to join the defence against 'Overlord', and no attacks were made during that month. During the first three months of 1944 the German anti-shipping air forces attacked Allied convoys at dusk after a long approach flight by day. In March, however, Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force deployed fighters in Sardinia to intercept, and the Germans turned to attacking at night. For the attacks at dusk the German strike aircraft made a rendezvous with their escorting fighters south of Montpellier and then flew south between the Balearic Islands and Sardinia. In night attacks the Germans did without escorting fighters, and they invented a method of attacking convoys which deserves description, although they did not always use it.[3] In this type of attack five distinct forces of aircraft took part, namely:

Long range reconnaissance,
Pathfinders,
The aptly-named Master of Ceremonies,
Illuminators of targets,
Strike aircraft, carrying torpedoes or radio-controlled bombs.

The long range reconnaissance aircraft searched for the convoy during the daylight and their final report of its position decided the position and time of the attack. When the preparations for the attack were complete the pathfinders took off, followed by the Master of Ceremonies twenty minutes later. Then the illuminators took off ten minutes ahead of the strike force and about one hour behind the pathfinders. When the pathfinders were nearing the reported position of the convoy they laid a line of marker buoys pointing towards it, and then searched for it with A.S.V. (Air to Surface Vessel) radar. When they had found the convoy they took up station to the north of it and homed the illuminators and strike aircraft to that position. Meanwhile the Master of Ceremonies flew to the convoy and stationed himself about 9,000 feet above it. From this position he directed and co-ordinated the work of the illuminators and the strike force. The illuminators flew at sea level towards the reported position of the convoy and when about twenty-five miles from it, they climbed and homed on to it by A.S.V. to drop their flares. The watching Master of Ceremonies dropped coloured flares to signal whether the target had been correctly illuminated or not, and if the illumination was correct, the strike force closed in to attack. Such was the Germans' method, and as soon as the Allied air forces had grasped what was happening they countered by directing the convoys' escorting fighters against the German recon-

Digitized by Google

naissance aircraft, pathfinders and the illuminators, and by dropping spoof marker buoys.

Besides this particular means of defence there were others which were more fundamental and general. Radar stations, which were unfortunately too few on the Mediterranean's African coast, plotted the course of the oncoming hostile aircraft. Fighters were scrambled from appropriate airfields and Red warnings were signalled to the ships. When Airacobras were sent to give continuous fighter cover by day to convoys in danger, Beaufighters also were sent because they could make a most effective defence against low-level attacks in daylight. At night Beaufighters and Mosquitoes, both equipped with A.I. (Airborne Interception) radar, protected convoys. An anti-aircraft cruiser was included in a convoy's escort whenever available, as was a Fighter Direction Ship. Unfortunately the Fighter Direction Ships in the Mediterranean at this time did not have the most up to date radar equipment. In favourable weather, in daylight, smoke screens were useful to conceal ships, and anti-aircraft fire from ships' guns was found very effective.

Four of the six German anti-convoy operations in April and May were directed against American ocean convoys eastward bound and one against a British ocean convoy also eastbound. The sixth attack was against a convoy from Corsica to Algiers. It seems that the Germans received earlier and more accurate reports of convoys entering the Mediterranean from the Atlantic than they received of westbound convoys. American convoys were better targets than the British, because they contained more ships.

The first air attack in April 1944 was made during the night 1st/2nd April and used the special method of attack, directed by a Master of Ceremonies. The target was the American eastbound ocean convoy UGS.36, and the position sixty miles west of Algiers. Fifteen torpedo-bombers attacked and set on fire one merchant ship which reached Algiers in tow. Three Ju. 88s. did not return to base for unknown reasons.

The next attack came during the night 11th/12th April and once more the Germans used their special method. The target was the American eastbound ocean convoy UGS.37: the position east-north-east of Algiers. During daylight on 10th and 11th April a German aircraft tried to shadow the convoy and on each day French Airacobras shot the spy down. Nevertheless at 11.30 p.m. on 11th April the attack came in and damaged an escorting American destroyer, U.S.S. *Holder*. Beaufighters from No. 153 Squadron R.A.F. claimed one Do. 217 and three Ju. 88s. German records show nine other Ju. 88s were lost that day. Some of the missing aircraft may have been in the force which attacked UGS.37 and it is possible but not certain that the ships' A.A. fire destroyed them. Four days

Digitized by Google

later UGS.37 was attacked by *U.407* off Derna, and one merchantman was sunk and one was so damaged that she had to be run ashore, where she seems to have broken up.*

The next two attacks were delivered at dusk on 20th April. The Germans did not use their special method, perhaps to gain surprise by changing their tactics. A strike force of between thirty and forty Ju. 88s, Do. 217s, He. 111s, and He. 177s set out to attack the convoy UGS.38 in a position near Algiers. During the day a Ju. 88 tried to shadow the convoy and was shot down by French Airacobras. As the strike force was flying south it sighted a 'local' convoy, CAF.31, which was bound for Algiers from Corsica. About eight Do. 217s peeled off to attack this convoy and sank one merchant ship. French Spitfires and Beaufighters from No. 153 Squadron R.A.F., which were covering the convoy, engaged the Do. 217s, damaging four and probably destroying a fifth which disappeared without trace. Meanwhile the rest of the strike force flew on and attacked UGS.38 with torpedoes. They sank the U.S. destroyer *Lansdale* and two merchant ships and damaged two more. There were no survivors from one of the sunken merchantmen, but the Germans paid heavily. The fighters which were covering the convoy had been reinforced by more Airacobras and by two Beaufighters, and all the fighters and the ships' A.A. guns put up a strong defence. This most probably accounted for seven Ju. 88s which never returned to base.

After this affair Admiral Sir John Cunningham and Air Vice-Marshal Sir Hugh Lloyd (Commander of Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force) reviewed yet again the problem of defending convoys.[4] They agreed to station patrolling night-fighters further to the northward of the routes of ocean convoys, and to press for Fighter Direction Ships with the latest radar equipment.

Three weeks were now to pass before German aircraft again attacked a convoy. During this interval the U-boats were very aggressive and Allied warships and aircraft retaliated by hunting them relentlessly. In the autumn of 1943 a method of combined search and attack by surface warships and aircraft had been introduced in the Mediterranean.[5] It was named 'Swamp' and by the spring of 1944 the Allied naval and air forces had become expert in using it. When a submarine had been discovered in a certain area or was suspected to be there, the air above was 'swamped' by aircraft which searched the area systematically and continually. The submarine therefore was forced to remain submerged until it had to surface to recharge its batteries, or until its captain decided to try to escape on the surface under cover of darkness at high surface

* We assume this to explain the loss of a ship recorded in April with no cause given.

Digitized by Google

speed. Meanwhile the anti-submarine warships were able to gain or regain contact and finally to kill. 'Swamp' was rather like a fox-hunt because the U-boat's commander used all his cunning to baffle his pursuers while they hunted the line. 'Danger deviseth shifts; wit waits on fear'. Between 2nd and 21st May U-boats sank one destroyer and one merchantman and damaged two destroyers and two merchantmen. On the other hand 'Swamp' sank four U-boats during the same period, and the hunters plainly were moving from finds to checks, from checks to views, and from views to deaths 'in the morning'.

The first U-boat to be sunk in May by a 'Swamp' was *U.371*. She had been lying in wait for a GUS convoy off the African coast not far from Djidjelli, and on the night 2nd/3rd May surfaced to top up batteries. She was detected and her commander, perceiving this, tried to make off on the surface, but he could not shake off the vigilant aircraft. At first there had been only one, a Wellington from No. 458 Squadron R.A.A.F., but, as the hunt went on, others arrived: Venturas from No. 17 Squadron S.A.A.F. and No. 500 Squadron R.A.F., Wellingtons from No. 36 Squadron R.A.F. and from No. 458 Squadron R.A.A.F. The warships in the hunt were the destroyer H.M.S. *Blankey*, U.S.S. *Menges*, *Campbell Pride*, and *Sustain*, and the French destroyers *Alcyon* and *Sénégalais*. The pursuit by sea and air was relentless and in the small hours of 3rd May *U.371* dived, and later showed her teeth by torpedoing the *Menges*. Nevertheless the grim pursuit continued and at length *U.371's* batteries were exhausted. Her commander decided to surface and to scuttle her but, dangerous as a hunted boar when it turns to charge the pig-sticker, he first torpedoed the *Sénégalais*. *U.371* then surfaced and was sunk. The *Menges* and the *Sénégalais* safely reached port in tow. Meanwhile the GUS convoy had sailed many miles westward and near Alboran Island was attacked by *U.967* which sank the American destroyer *Fechteler* in the convoy's escort. A 'Swamp' followed but was given up on 7th May. *U.967* had made a kill and had escaped.

On 14th May the westbound American ocean convoy, GUS.39, was attacked north-east of Cape Tenes by a U-boat which torpedoed two merchant ships without sinking either. A 'Swamp' began at 6.25 a.m. on the 14th, at first by a solitary Ventura of No. 500 Squadron R.A.F. which was joined by a Wellington of No. 36 Squadron R.A.F., and by Latecoeres of No. 2S Squadron F.F.A.F. The U-boat was chased across the Mediterranean to a position south of Alicante in Spain. Aircraft of five squadrons and seven U.S. warships joined in the hunt at various stages and on 16th May Wellingtons made several contacts. On 17th May depth charges

Digitized by Google

from U.S.S. *Hambleton* forced *U.616* to surface and scuttle herself.*

About five hours later on the 17th, U.S.S. *Ellyson* was returning to Oran with prisoners from *U.616* on board, when she was missed astern by three or four torpedoes. A 'Swamp' was begun and carried on by the same squadrons that had hunted *U.616* and by U.S. and French ships in weather which became worse and worse. The hunt continued in defiance of the weather and was rewarded when, on 19th May, 70 miles north of Cape Tenes, *U.960* came to the surface and was sunk by gunfire and depth charges dropped by a Ventura of No. 500 Squadron R.A.F.

On 19th May too, far to the east, a U-boat sank a merchant ship in a convoy (HA.43) from Taranto to Augusta. Aircraft from Malta and No. 242 Group R.A.F., and some Italian seaplanes began the hunt by air, and the destroyers H.M.S. *Termagant*, *Tenacious*, and *Liddesdale* with Italian escort vessels took it up at sea.† The hunt went on all day on 20th May until, just after midnight 20th/21st May, *U.453* surfaced and was sunk by gunfire in twenty minutes. 'Swamp' hunts were slow and patient; the kills were quick.

The next successful 'Swamp' did not occur until the end of July 1944. Between October 1943 and the end of May 1944 nineteen 'Swamps' took place and they killed seven U-boats. Captain Roskill has this to say:

> '. . . perhaps the grounds on which this whole series of joint operations against U-boats most merits attention, and preservation for posterity, are that in them the sea and air forces were completely integrated. Considerations such as the jealously guarded autonomy of both services, dogmatic views on the correct employment of ships or aircraft, and recital of the limitations of both arms were all, if not forgotten, totally subordinated to the single purpose of destroying the enemy . . .'‡

The underlying theme of the Mediterranean and Middle East series of volumes finds illustration in 'Swamp': three Services, three Elements, but one War: *tria juncta in uno*.

We must now continue the story of German air attacks on convoys. On 11th May 53 Ju. 88s set upon the American eastbound ocean convoy UGS.40 at a position near Dellys which is east of Algiers.* This convoy was a fine target because it contained 82 ships. The

---

* Aircraft engaged were from the following Squadrons:
No. 17 S.A.A.F. (Ventura); No. 500 R.A.F. (Ventura); No. 458 R.A.A.F. (Wellington); No. 36 R.A.F. (Wellington); No. 2S F.F.A.F. (Latecoeres).

† Aircraft engaged were from No. 221 Squadron R.A.F. (Wellington); No. 283 Squadron R.A.F. (Warwick); Italian Seaplane Wing (Cant. Z.501 and Cant. Z.506).

‡ Captain S. W. Roskill, R.N.: *The War at Sea*, Volume III Part I, (H.M.S.O. 1960) p. 326.

Digitized by Google

Germans on this occasion intended to attack at last light instead of using their special method of night attack. The bombers were escorted by 24 Ju. 88 C-6 long range fighters, including some which had flown from Lorient in Brittany expressly for this operation. However when this escort found no Allied fighters in an area where they were expected to be, it decided that its task was ended and turned back to base. This was a bad mistake. The Allied fighters had received the usual warning of an attack and eight Mosquitoes intercepted the unprotected bombers, so delaying them that they failed to reach the convoy until after last light. They then attacked, but without the help of the pathfinders and illuminators which would have paved the way for a proper night attack. Although 91 torpedoes were dropped they scored not a single hit, and paid heavily for this fiasco. The Mosquitoes of No. 256 Squadron R.A.F. claimed that they had destroyed two Ju. 88s and probably a third; the Beaufighters of No. 153 Squadron claimed two Ju. 88s destroyed and probably two more; the ships' A.A. gunners claimed two. If we add a Ju. 88 which was shot down by French Airacobras when it was shadowing the convoy early on 11th May, the claims amount to ten aircraft. German records however state that 14 Ju. 88s did not return to base. No. 108 Squadron R.A.F., which was on Intruder patrol, lost one Beaufighter, as did No. 272 Squadron R.A.F. which was covering the convoy.

The Germans attacked once more during May, on the night of 30th/31st, when the British eastbound ocean convoy KMS.51 was the target at a point some fifteen miles north of Dellys. Early on 30th May Beaufighters from No. 272 Squadron R.A.F. destroyed a Ju. 88 reconnaissance aircraft, and at 4 p.m. Airacobras of I/4 Squadron F.F.A.F. shot down another. On this occasion the Germans decided to use their special method of attack—pathfinders, illuminators, Master of Ceremonies, and striking force. About twenty minutes after midnight 30th/31st May between thirty and forty Ju. 88s engaged the convoy and sank one merchant ship. Beaufighters of No. 153 Squadron R.A.F. shot down one bomber, as did Beaufighters of No. 108 Squadron R.A.F.

German aircraft raided the port of Naples once in April and once in May, and shipping off Anzio twice in June, but did little damage for the loss of several aircraft.

Besides the air and U-boat attacks German mines were a weapon which had also to be taken seriously. The main sea route between Gibraltar and the Levant passes through very deep water which does not favour the use of mines, but the Straits of Bonifacio between Corsica and Sardinia, the channel between Sicily and Cape Bon, and the approaches to all the large ports were areas very suitable for mining. For example German aircraft laid mines off Anzio on five

Digitized by Google

occasions in April. The Allied minesweepers were constantly engaged in their dangerous work and did it so thoroughly that few ships were lost by striking mines. In April two merchant ships were damaged off Naples and one off Anzio, and in May and June the only casualties were small craft.

On 21st April the Germans started to use 'human torpedoes' to attack ships lying at anchor off Anzio.*[7] At dusk on 20th April twenty-three of these devices were launched at a point about eighteen miles from their target. Many came quickly to grief on off-shore sandbanks and owing to various mischances. Only a few reached Anzio at daybreak on 21st April. The defenders, forewarned by Intelligence, were alert and sank four torpedoes by gunfire and depth charges, and captured one intact. No Allied ship was damaged although the thirteen pilots who returned from the operation claimed that they had sunk a corvette, damaged a merchantman, and scored three hits on the mole at Anzio.[8]

This curious little episode must end our account of German attacks on Allied ships in the Mediterranean during April, May and June 1944. The losses of merchant ships of 500 tons G.R.T. and over are summarized in the table below. A very large number of ships passed through the Mediterranean during the period which we are considering and the losses are therefore very small, and small too in comparison with the losses suffered during the first three months of the year which amounted to 13 ships and 98,009 G.R.T. Nevertheless the Allies decided that convoys had become too large and would in future be restricted to a maximum of 90 ships per convoy. The speed which would qualify a ship to join an ocean going convoy was raised by one knot to nine and a half knots.

Number and tonnage of Allied Merchant Ships of 500 G.R.T. and over sunk at sea or in port in the Mediterranean, April, May and June 1944.

Month	By submarine	By aircraft	By mine	From other causes	Totals
April	2 - 14,386	3 - 19,755	—	—	5 - 34,141
May	1 - 7,147	1 - 2,873	—	—	2 - 10,020
June	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	3 - 21,533	4 - 22,628	—	—	7 - 44,161

* The human torpedo, named by the Germans *Marder* (in English, the animal *marten*) was a one-man weapon consisting of an electrically propelled carrier body with an underslung torpedo. The pilot sat in a cockpit on the carrier covered with plexi-glass, and released the torpedo at short range. A *Marder* weighed 2.8 tons, its greatest speed was 2.5 knots, and its range was 35 miles. It had been designed as a weapon for the defence of beaches.

Digitized by Google

Another important naval commitment was to support by gunfire 6th U.S. Corps in the Anzio beachhead and also 5th Army's operations on the coast of the Gulf of Gaeta. Rear-Admiral J. M. Mansfield, commanding 15th Cruiser Squadron, was responsible for organizing bombardments.[9] He normally disposed of four or five cruisers of his own squadron, the United States cruisers *Brooklyn* and *Philadelphia*, and about a dozen British and American destroyers. Unfortunately for the Mediterranean naval fire support was also required for 'Overlord' which enjoyed an overriding claim to Allied resources. The First Sea Lord, Sir Andrew Cunningham, warned his namesake Admiral Sir John Cunningham, C.-in-C. Mediterranean, that most of his cruisers would have to join the bombarding forces in the English Channel. Sir Andrew Cunningham, however, said that he would leave the recall until as late a date as possible because 'the Mediterranean cruisers were past-masters at bombardment and should require only three or four days' working up . . .'. Nevertheless in April the cruisers *Orion* and *Mauritius* and four destroyers were recalled, and Admiral Mansfield transferred his flag to the *Dido*. In May the cruisers *Sirius* and *Ajax* and twelve British destroyers were recalled leaving only H.M.S. *Dido*, U.S.S. *Brooklyn* and *Philadelphia*, and a few destroyers to support operations ashore. The French cruiser *Emile Bertin* helped during part of May. Mansfield's few remaining ships were kept busy. For example, between 12th and 19th May the *Dido* fired 1,865 rounds from her 5.2-inch guns in seventeen shoots, and the *Brooklyn* and *Philadelphia* added 1,735 rounds of 6-inch. Between 23rd and 29th May 6th U.S. Corps often called for support of its offensive from the Anzio beachhead until the troops had advanced beyond the range of naval guns. Later warships continued to support those troops of 5th Army who were advancing along the coast north of Rome.

(ii)

We will now turn from the fortunes of Allied shipping in the Mediterranean Theatre and the naval support for the Allied armies to the steadily mounting success of the Allied air and naval forces in denying to the Germans movement by sea in the Mediterranean.

The Germans did not depend upon the seaways as a Line of Communication nearly as much as the Allies because the mainstay of German administration was movement by rail and road.[10] Nevertheless the Germans did move large quantities of supplies and stores by sea because traffic on rail and road was continually interrupted by

Digitized by Google

the attacks of the Allied air forces.* In early April Kesselring was of the view that the sea-lift in his theatre must be increased by thirty per cent. The extra shipping required to meet this demand was never available, because *OKM's* programmes for repair and construction in Italian dockyards were constantly disrupted by Allied air attacks, as was the building of naval ferry and freight barges in southern France.† Once Kesselring's Armies began to retreat northwards from Rome their need for supply by sea decreased, although this need persisted in the case of the German forces stationed on the islands and mainland of the Balkans. In June, commodities such as fuel and cement were sent south from Genoa and Venice, but no German supplies were sent to Leghorn after 27th June, when the port was closed for demolition. In view of the usefulness of Genoa and Spezia to the *Kriegsmarine*, the preparations to destroy installations in these ports, which were initiated by Army engineers on 29th June, were not carried out. On Italy's eastern seaboard only harbours north of Ancona were still in use at the beginning of July.

The general attack upon German shipping can be conveniently described by dividing it into attacks upon ships and craft in port and attacks at sea. Both were continuous. The air attacks were made by the aircraft of Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, in particular by Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force, and by the aircraft of Royal Air Force, Middle East, mainly controlled by Air H.Q. Eastern Mediterranean.‡

---

* Tons of German cargo carried by sea to various destinations during April, May and June 1944:

	Italy, W. Coast	*Italy, E. Coast*	*Adriatic*	*Greece, Crete, Aegean.*
April	32,500	14,528	36,156	21,315
May	21,900	18,800	No figures available.	
June	19,200	16,800	No figures available	

† The naval ferry barge (*MFP*) was an ugly vessel of 150-250 tons; 10 knots; 1 x 8.8-cm gun; 1 x 3.7-cm A.A.; 1 x 2-cm A.A. twin; 2 rocket dischargers. Its uses were to carry troops or cargo, to act as an escort vessel, or to lay mines. The 'F' Lighter was very much the same.[11] On 25th May at Monfalcone Allied aircraft damaged 13 naval ferry barges on the slipways, sank 2 motor torpedo-boats and a submarine, destroyed a dockside crane and badly damaged a floating crane.

‡ On 1st February 1944 Air defence, Eastern Mediterranean and No. 201 (Naval Co-operation) Group were amalgamated to form 'Air H.Q., Eastern Mediterranean', the purpose being to create a maritime air force more on the lines of M.A.C.A.F.[12] Air Vice-Marshal T. A. Langford-Sainsbury was appointed A.O.C. with his H.Q. at Alexandria.

Nos. 209, 212 and 219 Fighter Groups became maritime groups, all the fighters and maritime aircraft being divided between them. Broadly speaking, these new groups were based on the areas of responsibility of the older fighter groups. For static air defence and air protection of shipping, the Egyptian/Palestinian border and its projection seawards formed the southern boundary for No. 209 Group operating in the Levant, and the meridian 25°30'E (Buq Buq) the western boundary for No. 219 operating from Egypt. For static air defence the western boundary for No. 212 Group operating from Libya was the Libyan/Tunisian border, but for shipping protection it was a line joining

Continued over page

Digitized by Google

We will look first at air and sea operations in the Western Mediterranean Basin, and then at those in the Eastern Basin, omitting any which have been mentioned in the account of the defence of Allied sea convoys.

During April, May and June 1944 Allied aircraft flew 5,610 sorties against ports and harbours and the ships in them, and of these sorties 328 were flown by R.A.F. Middle East. Against ships and craft at sea the air forces flew 5,792 sorties of which total 1,637 sorties were flown by R.A.F. Middle East. Fifty-one German naval vessels, 18 merchant ships of over 500 G.R.T. and 33 smaller ships were sunk in port during these three months.[13] 45 naval ships and a number of merchant ships, of which two were of over 500 G.R.T., were sunk at sea. Several more naval vessels and craft and merchant vessels were claimed as sunk, but it is impossible to verify these claims.* We shall present some examples of the sinking of ships in port and at sea, choosing them from attacks whose results were recorded by the Germans at the time. The numbers, by months, of merchant ships which the Allied air forces sank in port were:

Continued

Misurata with position 36°25′N 19°30′E and then to Cape Matapan. Though each Group was to be responsibile for maritime operations from its own area, for anti-submarine work No. 212 Group's sea area was extended eastwards to meridian 30°00′ (Alexandria). There was of necessity some overlapping of maritime operations, for example in long range sea reconnaissances.

In March a Mediterranean Joint Air Order was issued redefining the areas of responsibility of M.A.C.A.F. and A.H.Q., E.M. and the corresponding Naval Commands. (*See Map 20*). This M.J.A.O. slightly amended the western boundary of No. 212 Group's shipping protection area which from then on terminated northwards at Cape Killini instead of at Cape Matapan.

* The Germans had at least twenty types of minor war vessels and it is often impossible to tell to which type British reports of losses inflicted refer because there was no standard nomenclature.[14] For example British records described any offensive torpedo craft as an E-boat, and any small minesweeper as an R-boat, although an R-boat was a motor minesweeper of between 115-189 tons, and the M-boat was a minesweeper of 722–888 tons, steam-propelled.

The most easily recognizable of the German surface warships were the Italian torpedo-boats which the Germans had seized in September 1943, replacing their Italian names by numbers. Seven of these were sunk in the three months April to June 1944;[15]

TA.16 *Castelfidardo*
TA.22 *Missori*
TA.23 *Impavido*
TA.25 *Intrepido*
TA.26 *Ardito*
TA.27 *Auriga*
TA.30 *Dragone*

TA.16 and *22* were old ships, launched in 1924; the remainder had been launched in 1943 and 1944. They were small fast ships and were very useful as escorts and for anti-submarine duties although their armament was light. They ranged from approximately 800 to just below 2,000 tons, with speeds of 30-32 knots.

Besides these there were the many types of minor war vessels which have appeared in our pages; war freighters, minesweepers, 'F' lighters, R-boats, naval ferry barges, Siebel ferries, *UJ* vessels and so on.[16] We have no breakdown by types of the losses of these war vessels in the Mediterranean, but they were heavy, and the losses could not be replaced by dockyards which were constantly subjected to air attacks.

Digitized by Google

	Over 500 G.R.T.	*Under 500 G.R.T.*
April	4 – 9,207 G.R.T.	10 – 723 G.R.T.
May	10 – 27,135 G.R.T.	12 – 1,348 G.R.T.
June	4 – 14,825 G.R.T.	11 – 600 G.R.T.

The largest air attack during the period from April to June was made by the Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force on 29th April on Toulon. 178 Fortresses and 310 Liberators dropped 1,171 tons of bombs, composed of 2,623 thousand-pound bombs.[17] This was the largest number of this kind of bomb to have been dropped so far in one attack on one target. The results were not commensurate with so great an effort. *U.421*, the motor vessel *Chisone* (6,618 tons), and the hopper-barge *Andromede II* (1,232 tons) were sunk, and a good deal of damage was done to the port and the arsenal.

In all the attacks on ports on the west coast of Italy during April approximately 2,144 tons of bombs were dropped. In the attacks on Piombino on the 14th/15th and 19th and on Genoa on 30th April/1st May, the total of 137 tons of bombs dropped resulted in the destruction of three naval ferry barges and damage to three others, the sinking of one small craft and damage to another as well as to four patrol boats, and the sinking of the war transport *KT.2* of 795 G.R.T. The attacks on Leghorn on 14th/15th and Piombino on 28th show another important result of the bombing of enemy ports. At Leghorn railway installations and the station were considerably damaged, rolling stock was destroyed and all rail traffic was stopped. At Piombino a rolling mill and foundries were completely destroyed and 30 per cent of the town demolished, and railway installations were badly damaged.

In the attacks during May, 3,712 tons were dropped on ports on the west coast of Italy. Spezia was attacked seven times and 1,040 tons of bombs were dropped there because the port was a focus of coastal traffic on the west side of Italy. In an attack by four French Spitfires with less than a ton of bombs the minelayer *Kehrwieder* (359 tons) was sunk. The result of all these attacks was a satisfactorily large number of ships and craft sunk or damaged, namely:

Sunk	*Damaged*	
S.S. *Argentea* (3,302 G.R.T.)	*KT*	2
S.S. *Asie* (8,561 G.R.T.)	*MFP*	10
S.S. *Filippo Grimani* (3,431 G.R.T.)	E-boats	2
S.S. *Verdi* (2,423 G.R.T.)	Corvette	1
S.S. *Dociletas* (1,246 G.R.T.)	Steamships	5
S.S. *Persia* (804 G.R.T.)	Depot ship	1
S.S. *Alma* (598 G.R.T.)	Harbour Craft	3
S.S. *Vincenzina* (1,579 G.R.T.)	Barges	8
Minelayer *Vallelunga* (916 tons)	Tanker barge	1
Minelayer *Kehrwieder* (359 tons)	and numerous	
One other war transport	others.	

Digitized by Google

Patrol boats	3
MFP	3
E-boat	1
Steamship	1
Motor vessel	1
Minesweepers	2
Tanker	1
Tug	1
Barges	7

In the list above we have named only the larger ships.

During June seven attacks were made on Genoa, Savona, Spezia, Porto Ferraio (Elba) and Leghorn. Some 612 tons of bombs were dropped in all and the following German vessels sunk:

TA.27 (696 tons), former Italian *Auriga*	
Blockship S.S. *Securitas* (5,366 tons)	
Blockship S.S. *Campania* (5,247 tons)	
Other blockships	2
MFP	1
Motor vessel	1
Tug	1
Lighters	4

The records state that a number of vessels were damaged but give no details. The attack on Spezia on 29th June is an example of the damage which could be done to a port even if no ships were sunk or damaged. The small force of 40 Marauders dropped 50 tons of bombs and destroyed one-third of the artillery ammunition stored in an Ordnance depot, several workshops, and a large amount of stores and equipment held in depots belonging to the Underwater Obstacles Command.

By the last week of June the western wing of the German armies had retreated to a line which stretched from Lake Trasimeno to Piombino. Their L. of C. had become shorter and their need for seaborne supplies smaller. There was less coastal traffic and the ports of the west coast of Italy therefore attracted fewer air attacks. During June no more than 777 tons of bombs were dropped on these ports, mainly by the heavy day bombers of M.A.S.A.F. which still played the largest, albeit reduced, part in these operations.

Ports on the east coast of Italy were attacked far less heavily than those on the west coast as the following comparative table shows:

	Western Italy			*Eastern Italy*		
	April	*May*	*June*	*April*	*May*	*June*
Sorties	1,080	1,992	571	261	329	239
Bombs (tons)	2,143	3,712	777	372	479	340

Digitized by Google

M.A.S.A.F.'s heavy day bombers played the largest part in attacking ports on the east coast although bombers and fighter-bombers of all kinds were engaged in the operations.
See also Map 13

Ports on the eastern or Balkan shore of the Adriatic were not attacked very often yet a surprising variety of aircraft took part: heavy day bombers from M.A.S.A.F.; R.A.F. Wellington medium night bombers, and fighter bombers from M.A.C.A.F.; and daylight bombers and fighter-bombers of the Desert Air Force. Beyond the ports of the Adriatic's eastern coast lay the ports of Greece and Crete, and the harbours of the Aegean. M.A.C.A.F. and aircraft from R.A.F. Middle East attacked ports in Greece, and R.A.F. Middle East attacked targets in Crete and the Aegean. Some examples of attacks on the ports of the Adriatic and of the eastern Mediterranean are set out in Table 1 below.*

In contrast with the losses which the Allied air forces inflicted upon the enemy's ships in port, air attacks upon his ships at sea produced only a small number of sinkings during April, May and June 1944.† In earlier years when the Axis powers were maintaining large forces in Africa, the Mediterranean had been a richly stocked hunting ground for the Allied airmen, and constant air reconnaissance had found the quarry which was hunted by fairly large numbers of aircraft. By the end of 1943 the scene had changed.[20] Most of the enemy's large ships had been sunk, and the few which were afloat lay in harbour and awaited destruction. German sea traffic was carried on by small ships which sneaked along in coastal waters or to and from the islands which were still held by German garrisons. While the Mediterranean as a whole offered fewer targets, increased German activity in the Balkans made the Adriatic and the Aegean more attractive to Allied airmen than they had been before 1944.

In the spring of 1944 air reconnaissance continued to be important but usually as a part of the defence of Allied sea convoys rather than as a means of finding German shipping to attack. The Mediterranean Allied Photographic Reconnaissance Wing regularly surveyed the enemy's larger ports in order to collect information about U-boats. General Reconnaissance aircraft of the U.S. 62nd Wing at Naples and of the U.S. 63rd Wing in Sardinia (both Wings belonged to M.A.C.A.F.) watched the Tyrrhenian and Ligurian

---

* Ships sunk included some *UJ* boats.[18] This type of boat was an anti-submarine escort craft. There was no standard type: trawlers, war freighters, whalers, fishing vessels etc. were used.

† So far as can be traced no enemy merchant ships were sunk by air attack at sea during April and May, but in June Allied aircraft succeeded in sinking two large ones (total 9,299 G.R.T.) and three small ones (total 640 G.R.T.) at sea.

Digitized by Google

TABLE I

Some examples of air attacks on German ships in ports of the Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean April, May, June 1944.[19]

Date	Place	Air Force	Bombs (tons)	Results	
				Sunk	Damaged
April 7th	Civitanova	No. 112 Squadron R.A.F. (D.A.F.) 12 Kittyhawks	3	S.S. *Eneo* (545 tons) M.V. *Jordan* 1 Landing Craft	1 Landing Craft
Night 10th/11th	Ancona	No. 232 Wing R.A.F. (D.A.F.) 3 Bostons	3		
11th	„	No. 239 Wing R.A.F. (D.A.F.) 24 Kittyhawks	9	2 small ships	Port closed to merchant vessels owing to incidental damage in the attacks.
Night 11th/12th	„	No. 232 Wing R.A.F. (D.A.F.) 4 Bostons.	3		
12th	„	No. 250 Squadron R.A.F. (D.A.F.) 12 Kittyhawks	5	S.S. *Mariannina* (1,262 tons)	
Night 11th/12th	Monfalcone	10 Wellingtons Nos. 231, 236, 330 Wings R.A.F. (M.A.S.A.F.)	18	—	Dockyard and U-boat pens, repair shops.
20th	„	M.A.S.A.F. 64 Liberators	142	Corvette *UJ.203* (565 tons) 1 Midget Submarine (both formerly Italian).	
April 20th	Porto Marghera (Venice)	M.A.S.A.F. Part of force of 36 Fortresses	96	Corvette *UJ.206* (565 tons) (formerly Italian)	

Digitized by Google

TABLE I (continued)

Date	Place	Air Force	Bombs (tons)	Results	
				Sunk	Damaged
April 23rd	Ancona	D.A.F. 12 Marauders	19	—	S.S. *Maria Ruta* (350 tons) Berths in port.
May 15th	„	No. 450 Squadron R.A.A.F. (D.A.F.) 12 Kittyhawks	10.3.	S.S. *Nannella* (1,017 tons).	
25th	Monfalcone	M.A.S.A.F. 61 Liberators	132.6.	Corvette *UJ.204* (565 tons) Submarine *Beilul* (both formerly Italian)	2 E-boats. 13 Ferry barges.
				2 E-boats	Port Installations.
				1 Harbour defence vessel	
June 2nd	Heraklion (Crete)	R.A.F.M.E. Baltimores Nos. 15 Sqdn S.A.A.F. (9 A/C) 545 Sqdn R.A.A.F. (2 A/C)	8	*TA.967* (former Italian *Castelfidardo*) (967 tons)	—
8th	„	R.A.F.M.E. 12 Marauders 6 Baltimores	16.1. 4	2 Patrol vessels.	1 Patrol vessel.
June 10th	Trieste	M.A.S.A.F. 113 Liberators	248	Hospital ship *Innsbruck* (492 tons)	
				1 Merchant ship	Dockyard
				(Loss and damage incidental in attack on oil refinery.)	

Digitized by Google

seas and their coastal waters. Sicily and Malta were no longer bases for any anti-shipping operations. M.A.C.A.F.'s No. 242 Group R.A.F. provided air reconnaissance of the Adriatic and its coastal waters from southern Italy. Reconnaissance aircraft of Air Headquarters, Eastern Mediterranean, were responsible for finding targets in the Aegean sea and in the sea of Crete, as well as for playing their part in protecting Allied ships from submarine attack in parts of the eastern basin of the Mediterranean which lay beyond the range of those aircraft of M.A.C.A.F. which were based in north-west Africa. In 1944 it had become unusual for reconnaissance aircraft over any sea to find targets which were large enough to justify a special striking force. Exceptions of course did occur, like the attack on the *Gertrud* convoy in the sea of Crete which is described later.

During these lean months most of the air attacks on German ships at sea might be called impromptu. By day single coastal Beaufighters or small groups of them attacked ships and craft on sight. General Reconnaissance aircraft attacked in the same way, and at night sometimes found their victims by using Air to Surface Vessel radar. They illuminated them with flares to aim their missiles. The principal hunters were the anti-shipping fighters and fighter-bombers of the several air formations. In the Tyrrhenian and Ligurian seas and their coastal waters these aircraft belonged to M.A.C.A.F. and were supported by fighters and fighter-bombers of XII U.S. Tactical Air Command (a part of Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force). In the Adriatic the anti-shipping aircraft belonged to No. 242 Group R.A.F. (M.A.C.A.F.). They were supported by fighters and fighter-bombers of the Desert Air Force (Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force) until the end of June when the newly created Balkan Air Force (see Section vii) took over all the Desert Air Force's tasks in the Adriatic except in the coastal waters off north-east Italy. Air H.Q. Eastern Mediterranean was responsible for anti-shipping operations in the Aegean and around Crete. Everywhere the open seas provided many fewer targets than coastal waters.

The attacks of fighters and fighter-bombers were quick and violent. A fighter, flying low, would flash over the length of an enemy ship in seconds, raking the decks with a blast of fire from multiple machine guns. The fighter-bomber took only a matter of minutes for the precise actions of lining up and releasing its bombs. In May 1943 an even more effective weapon had appeared for the first time in the Mediterranean when No. 608 Squadron R.A.F. sank *U.755* with rocket projectiles (R.P.).[21] By the end of 1943 these missiles had superseded the aerial torpedo as a weapon for attacking the ships and craft of shallow draught which became the commonest

Digitized by Google

targets. In the spring of 1944 there were two main types of R.P. One weighed 95 lbs and carried a 60 lb explosive semi armour-piercing head which could penetrate three-quarters of an inch of steel plate, making a hole of eight inches across. The second type of R.P. weighed 57 lbs and carried a 25 lb armour-piercing head which, depending upon the range at which the projectile was fired, could penetrate from 2.7 to 3.3 inches of armour, making a hole of six inches across. This projectile was very effective against merchant vessels because of its good underwater trajectory. Some interesting characteristics of these R.P.s were discovered in operations by Nos. 252 and 603 Squadrons R.A.F. (coastal Beaufighters) in Middle East. The 57 lb R.P. with the 25 lb head was more accurate and had a flatter trajectory in flight than the 95 lb R.P. with the 60 lb head. Moreover if the propellant of the 57 lb R.P. was still burning when the projectile had penetrated the target, the R.P. was incendiary as well as explosive. The best way to gain this double effect was to aim at the sea a little short of a vessel's waterline, and to release the R.P. at 800 yards' range or less. In contrast, the 95 lb R.P. with the 60 lb head exploded on first impact whether this was on the water or on the vessel, and so if the first impact was on the water, the force of the explosion was wasted. In the end the 60 lb head proved to be best used against targets on the land, like gun positions. At sea R.P.s were always directed against a vessel's broadside.

The Beaufighter which was commonly equipped to carry R.P.s was the Mark X. This aircraft could carry 16 R.P.s but normally carried eight which were equally distributed under each wing. They could be fired in twos, fours, or eights. The Hurricane IV carried eight R.P.s, four under each wing. The pilots of Beaufighters could find no practical alternative to approaching the target in a direct shallow dive at a speed of 230 knots, which made the aircraft very vulnerable to flak.* The pilot judged when to release the R.P. partly by eye and partly by using A.S.V. as a rangefinder. The pilots of Hurricanes favoured an approach at sea level, but occasionally used the shallow dive. They usually released their R.P.s at a range of 250 to 300 yards, but could release them at longer or shorter ranges. R.P.s could be used on clear or moonlight nights although then the target could only be glimpsed.

No. 603 Squadron R.A.F. (Beaufighters) in the Middle East began to use R.P.s on operations in the middle of December 1943. No. 39 Squadron R.A.F. (Beaufighters) in north-west Africa was equipped

* An invention soon appeared which enabled an aircraft to launch its R.P.s while flying parallel to a target such as a number of ships in line ahead. A speed-operated aerofoil was fitted to the rocket which turned it 90° to find the target. A demonstration was given in which the R.P. wilfully turned through 180°, disconcerting some distinguished spectators who were watching from a supposedly safe position behind the aircraft.

Digitized by Google

TABLE II

Some examples of Allied air attacks on German ships at sea — April, May, June 1944.[25]

Date	Place	Aircraft	German ships	
			Sunk	Damaged
April 25th	West of Capraia Island	Possibly Thunderbolt FBs U.S. XII T.A.C.	*TA.23* (869 tons) Former *Impavido*	—
May 13th	Five miles west of Rapallo	18 Spitfires (M.G. and Cannon), Nos. 154, 232, 243 Squadrons, No. 322 Wing R.A.F.	Minesweeper *R.215*	—
14th	Mouth of River Ombrone	Thunderbolt FBs U.S. XII T.A.C.	*MFP Malente*	
14th	North of Leghorn	Thunderbolt FBs U.S. XII T.A.C. (probably)	E-boats 2	
June 2nd/3rd	North of Piombino	Hurricanes (Guns and RPs) No. 6 Squadron R.A.F.	E-boat 1	E-boat 1 I-boat 1
3rd/4th	Between S. Stefano–Piombino	No. 6 Squadron R.A.F.	Barge 1	Barges 2
4th/5th	Mouth of River Ombrone	No. 6 Squadron R.A.F.	*MFPs 772, 611*	
5th	North of S. Stefano	Beaufighters (Rocket) Nos. 39 and 272 Squadrons, No. 328 Wing R.A.F. (probably)	I-boats 2	I-boat 1
6th	Off S. Stefano	Spitfires (M.G.s and Cannon) No. 326 Squadron F.F.A.F.	*MFPs 2*	—

Digitized by Google

TABLE II (continued)

Date	Place	Aircraft	German ships	
			Sunk	Damaged
15th	North of Leghorn	Spitfires FBs Nos. 326 and 328 Squadrons F.F.A.F. (probably)	S.S. *Erlangen* (3,509 tons)	—
18th	Off Elba	Thunderbolts, U.S. 57th Fighter Bomber Group; Spitfires Nos. 251 and 322 Wings R.A.F. (all of U.S. XII T.A.C.)	*MFP 777*	—
June 19th	Off Leghorn	Thunderbolts, U.S. Fighter Bomber Group	*MFP* 1	—
20th	Mouth of River Magra (S.E. of Spezia)	Hurricanes (Rocket) No. 6 Squadron R.A.F.	*MFP* or *MNL** 1	—
21st	Mouth of River Arno	Thunderbolts U.S. XII T.A.C. (probably)	*MFP 2768*	—
25th	Off Sete	Liberators M.A.S.A.F. (probably)	S.S. *Djezair* (5,790 tons)	—

* *MNL* — naval supply lighter.

Digitized by Google

with R.P.s in January 1944 and moved to Sardinia in April. Another squadron in Sardinia received R.P.s in June 1944. In the Adriatic No. 6 Squadron R.A.F. (Hurricanes) began to operate with R.P.s on 29th March 1944, and on 13th May a detachment of the squadron began to operate from Corsica. By the end of June 1944 there were in Middle East at least three squadrons of Beaufighters equipped with R.P.s.

In choosing examples of air attacks upon German ships at sea, we again take attacks whose results were recorded by the Germans at the time.[22] Attacks in the Western Mediterranean and the Tyrrhenian and Ligurian seas are given in Table II below. Besides these attacks, three in the Adriatic must be mentioned. On 8th April aircraft, probably M.C.200s and 205s of the co-belligerent Italian Air Force, sank three large barges at a point seven miles north of Zara (Zadar). On 30th May, off Fiume, Hurricanes of No. 6 Squadron R.A.F. sank with rocket projectiles Siebel Ferry *No. 264*, which was carrying troops.* On 22nd June Beaufighters of M.A.C.A.F., off Pola, sank with rocket projectiles the ocean tug *Marittino*. On 20th May No. 6 Squadron R.A.F. scored another success, this time in the Ionian sea off Corfu by sinking with R.P.s the motor minesweeper *R.190*.

At the beginning of June Nos. 212 and 219 Groups R.A.F. gained an important success by destroying almost a whole German convoy which was bound for Heraklion in Crete from Piraeus, the port of Athens. These Groups were controlled by Air H.Q., Eastern Mediterranean, which was subordinate to Royal Air Force, Middle East.[24] The squadrons which took part in the operations are listed in the footnote which shows also the airfields in Egypt and Cyrenaica from which they came.† By the end of May 1944 the garrison of Crete badly needed a replenishment of supplies and stores because during the month only 639 tons of the 6,000 tons which had been asked for reached the island.[27] Since the middle of May three

* The Siebel Ferry was a motor-propelled craft about 80 feet long and 50 feet in the beam. Speed 9 knots. The craft could mount 3 x 8.8-cm guns and a number of smaller A.A. weapons. It could embark about 450 men or 10 vehicles.[22]

† *See Map 20*

No. 212 Group R.A.F.

No. 38 Squadron R.A.F. (Wellingtons), Berka (Benghazi)
No. 454 Squadron R.A.A.F. (Baltimores), Berka
No. 24 Squadron S.A.A.F. (Marauders), Gambut
No. 15 Squadron S.A.A.F. (Baltimores), Gambut
No. 94 Squadron R.A.F. (Spitfires), Bu Amud (Near Tobruk)
No. 227 Squadron R.A.F. (Beaufighters), Berka
No. 603 Squadron R.A.F. (Beaufighters), Gambut
No. 16 Squadron S.A.A.F. (Beaufighters), Berka

No. 219 Group R.A.F.

No. 213 Squadron R.A.F. (Mustangs and Spitfires), Idcu (near Alexandria)
No. 252 Squadron R.A.F. (Beaufighters), Matruh

No. 2 Wing S.A.A.F. (Liberators), Jebel Hamzi[26]

Digitized by Google

merchant ships, loaded with 7,000 tons of cargo for Crete, had been lying at Piraeus. They were S.S. *Gertrud* (1,960 tons) which gave its name to the convoy, S.S. *Sabine* (2,252 tons), and S.S. *Tanais* (1,545 tons). Their departure was delayed by bad weather and difficulties in providing an escort. They sailed at last at midnight 31st May/1st June escorted by four torpedo-boats, three other anti-submarine vessels, and a number of aircraft. The convoy's luck was out from the start because twenty minutes after it sailed a patrolling Wellington from No. 38 Squadron R.A.F. spotted it and bombed it. At first light on 1st June a Baltimore from No. 454 Squadron R.A.A.F. sighted the convoy in a position some ten miles north-west of the island of Antiparos, and at 10 a.m. another Baltimore spotted it off Pholegandros. From this time onwards aircraft shadowed the convoy closely and its probable course became sufficiently clear for an attack to be planned. The arrangements took some time. The airfields from which the attacking aircraft came were about 300 miles away.

The attack began at 7.03 p.m. on 1st June when a first wave of bombers struck. This wave was composed of 12 Marauders from No. 24 Squadron S.A.A.F.; 15 Baltimores from No. 15 Squadron S.A.A.F. and 3 Baltimores from No. 454 Squadron R.A.A.F.: in all 30 bombers escorted by 13 Spitfires from No. 94 Squadron R.A.F. and Mustangs from No. 213 Squadron R.A.F. The Baltimores' bombs straddled S.S. *Sabine* hitting her aft: the Marauders' bombs fell just ahead of her. Five minutes after the first attack, the second wave of aircraft swept in. This wave consisted of 8 Beaufighters, armed with rocket projectiles, from No. 252 Squadron R.A.F.; 14 Beaufighters, armed with cannon, from the same squadron, No. 16 Squadron S.A.A.F. and No. 603 Squadron R.A.F. Two Beaufighters from No. 227 Squadron R.A.F. were the escort. This attack was more effective. S.S. *Sabine* was hit several times and set on fire. S.S. *Gertrud* was hit in the engine room, burst into flames, and became unmanageable. Three escorting vessels fared badly: *UJ.2101* was hit by twelve rocket projectiles and sank; *UJ.2105* was set on fire and capsized; the torpedo-boat *TA.16* was hard hit but remained afloat. An escort vessel took the *Gertrud* in tow and brought her, still on fire, into the inner harbour at Heraklion shortly after 4 a.m. on 2nd June. S.S. *Sabine* limped into the outer harbour, ran aground, and burned out. Only S.S. *Tanais* entered the harbour unscathed. Meanwhile the port of Heraklion was attacked. At 10.48 p.m. on 1st June 8 Wellingtons of No. 38 Squadron R.A.F. dropped 10.7 tons of bombs and 11 Liberators of No. 2 Wing S.A.A.F. dropped a further 29.3 tons, destroying the storage tanks for naval fuel oil. A second force of bombers was sent to Heraklion next evening, composed of 11 Marauders from No. 24 Squadron S.A.A.F. with 19

Digitized by Google

tons of bombs, and 9 Baltimores from No. 15 Squadron S.A.A.F. also 2 Baltimores from No. 454 Squadron R.A.A.F. carrying 8 tons of bombs. S.S. *Gertrud* was hit amidships, and the fire on board raged more fiercely. At 7.20 p.m. the ship blew up, and the explosion sank *TA.16*, the former Italian torpedo-boat *Castelfidardo*, which was lying near by.[28] The *Tanais* escaped damage but on 9th June was sunk by the submarine H.M.S. *Vivid* when bound for Piraeus.

This well-executed operation cost the squadrons which took part one Baltimore, one Wellington, and four Beaufighters. The Germans held a number of angry post-mortem examinations. *OKM* told Admiral Aegean that he should have understood months earlier that it was impracticable to use fairly large merchant ships to supply Crete and that local sailing vessels were better for this purpose.[29] This was unfair because on 27th March Admiral Aegean had advised that motor sailing vessels and ferry barges, well-armed and well-engined, must be used to supply the islands in general and not Crete alone.[30] The Naval Headquarters *Group South* said that sheer necessity explained the sailing of the *Gertrud* convoy, and that its loss proved that the supply of Crete could not be guaranteed unless the *Luftwaffe* could give much stronger protection to convoys. Everyone, down to the commanding officer of *9th Torpedo-Boat Flotilla*, accused the unfortunate *Luftwaffe* of weakness and inertia. On 8th June the difficulties of supplying Crete were discussed at one of the Führer's regular conferences with the Naval Staff. Hitler, with curious logic, saw the difficulties of supplying Crete as an added reason for the importance which he attached to holding the island.

(iii)

See Map 13

The River Danube has always been a principal Line of Communication and trade in central and eastern Europe. In the Second World War it became an essential part of the German logistic system.[31] The railways of Balkan countries, especially of Rumania, had suffered constant interruption and great damage from Allied air attacks and from the wear and tear of the intense traffic which was generated by the Eastern Front.[32] To take an important example of the consequences, the Rumanian railways could no longer carry away the full output of the Ploesti oilfields. During April 1944 only 137,000 tons of petroleum were removed from a stock of 270,000 tons which was awaiting transport. In early May an expert from *OKW* reported that Rumania's output of crude oil had dropped from a monthly average of 430,000 tons to a present daily production which represented only 240,000 tons a month. These statistics prompted the German High Command to take vigorous

Digitized by Google

measures for protection of the oilfields and reinforcement of their A.A. defences and also to pay close attention to the transport potentialities of the Danube.[33]

The Allied Intelligence and Operations Staffs appreciated the importance of the Danube to the Germans and how great might be the consequences of even temporary stoppages of traffic on the river. They could recall the disruption caused by the mines which German aircraft had dropped in the Suez Canal in 1941, and the difficulty of finding them in the narrow channel of shallow water a mere 90 miles long.[34] No. 205 Group R.A.F. began systematic minelaying in the Danube in April 1944, and by 1st June 1944 had laid 531 mines in 153 sorties. The details of these operations (named 'Gardening') are set out in Table III below, but the rough geographical distribution of the attacks, and their number is as follows:

Middle Danube	
Area of Budapest (Hungary)	2
Area of Belgrade (Yugoslavia)	5
Lower Danube	
Area Turnu Severin–Turnu Magurele (Rumania)	1

TABLE III

Minelaying in the Danube April-June 1944.[35]

Date	Place	Aircraft	Mines Laid
April			
8th/9th	Between Belgrade–Bazias	3 R.A.F. Liberators	12
		14 Wellingtons	28
12th/13th	Between Budapest–Belgrade	11 R.A.F. Liberators	63
		22 Wellingtons	44
14th/15th	Between Prahova–Turnu Magurele and on tributary (R. Jiul) south of Craiova	5 R.A.F. Liberators	30
May			
5th/6th	Smederevo	11 R.A.F. Liberators	65
		20 Wellingtons	40
9th/10th	Novi Sad area	8 R.A.F. Liberators	48
29th/30th	Komarom, north-west of Budapest	12 R.A.F. Liberators	72
31st/1st June	East of Belgrade	9 R.A.F. Liberators	54
		38 Wellingtons	75
		152	531

Digitized by Google

At first minelaying was possible only during a moonlit night because the aircraft had to descend to 200 feet to drop its mines. Later the use of Pathfinder aircraft and flares overcame this handicap, and mines could be laid during dark nights.

The next minelaying operation did not take place until 1st/2nd July 1944, but during June over 1,000 sorties were flown by aircraft of the Strategic Air Force and more than 2,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Danube ports and installations along the river.

From the first the Germans considered that minelaying was a serious threat. On 13th April the river was reported closed between Galatz and the Black Sea and on the 14th the Naval Staff was agitated by learning that only four 'mine-spotting' aircraft were available for the whole river.[36] On 16th April the *Luftwaffe* promised to provide ten more of these aircraft, but the arrangements for finding and clearing mines were unsatisfactory because they were uncoordinated. On 28th April the Danube was pronounced to be clear of mines between Vienna and the Black Sea, but the months' transports had been seriously disrupted. Between 9th and 22nd April no oil was moved on the river, and on the 23rd the Naval Group South reported that many of its Crimean convoys were having to return to the peninsula empty-handed, as their scheduled cargoes of military supplies had not reached the Black Sea ports.

In May the Allies' strategic air offensive accelerated the 'oil war' by inflicting renewed heavy damage on oilfields and transports in Rumania, and by attacking hydrogenation plants within the Reich.[37] Presented with sombre prognoses of the resultant drop in supplies for the *Wehrmacht*, Hitler convened two conferences at the end of May to outline what must be done to save the oil programme from collapse, including the creation of various appointments which were ratified in early June. The oilfields in Rumania acquired their own Commandant in the person of General Gerstenberg, the senior *Luftwaffe* officer in that country, and a civilian Commissar (Geilenberg) was given sweeping powers to co-ordinate all measures for defence, repair and dispersal of oil installations in and outside the Reich. Hitler's especial interest in the Danube was evident in his appointment of a senior naval officer (General-Admiral Marschall) to act as his Special Plenipotentiary in all matters concerning transport on this river.[38] On 30th May the Führer called upon the Navy and the *Luftwaffe* to make yet more strenuous efforts to keep the traffic moving, and pointed out that the closures caused by minelaying had not only restricted the river's capacity to carry fuel but had also prevented the distribution of 10,000 tons of sorely needed ammunition to the troops who were fighting on the Dniester front.

Digitized by Google

At this time some 43 miles of the Danube were blocked in the area of Belgrade and in mid-month mines had accounted for four barges and one powered barge destroyed, and six barges and one river freighter damaged.[39] On 31st May the Inspector of Mine Clearing was however able to report that 31 minesweepers were at work between Bratislava (on the Czechoslovak border) and the Black Sea, with a further 61 expected to come into service by the end of July. Resources in 'mine spotting' aircraft had also improved, with 15 on patrol on 30th May, and reinforcements promised from Italy, the Balkans, and even the North Sea. All in all, the Germans were put to a great deal of trouble by a very small number of minelaying sorties flown by the Allies.

(iv)

We now descend from the skies to the surface of the Mediterranean Sea's several divisions and to their depths beneath in order to follow the naval attack on German seaborne traffic. As in earlier sections of this chapter we deal with the Western and then with the Eastern Basins, and we will consider submarine warfare followed by the work of the Coastal Forces. The Adriatic stands apart because the link between naval operations and the guerilla war carried on by the Yugoslav Partisans against the Germans is so close that these naval operations will be considered in a later section of this chapter which glances at the war in Yugoslavia.

See Maps 12 *and* 13

In September 1943 the Admiralty decided to send all S and T class submarines to join the Eastern Fleet as they became available, and to replace them by U and V class submarines from new construction.[40] By 1944 only two S class remained in the Mediterranian, and most of the boats were of the U class until H.M.S. *Vampire*, *Vigorous*, *Vivid* and *Vox*, all of V class, arrived in June.

In the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian seas and in the Gulf of Lions and the waters off eastern Spain, operations against German seatraffic were carried on for the most part by the submarines and the Coastal Forces because the larger warships were engaged in hunting U-boats, in protecting Allied convoys and in supporting army operations.[41] The 10th Submarine Flotilla was based on Maddalena in Sardinia, and in April 1944 its boats completed eight patrols. Unfortunately targets were scarce. On 2nd April *Upstart* attacked a convoy of 'F' lighters off Cape d'Antibes (east of Cannes) without success, but on 13th April an interesting example of 'out of the frying pan into the fire' occurred. On this day *Untiring* approached Oneglia and saw that Allied aircraft were attacking the place. The German merchant ship *Diana* (1,190 tons) put to sea to escape

Digitized by Google

the air attack only to be torpedoed and sunk by the submarine. On 25th April, *Untiring*, during another patrol off Hyères Roads, sank *UJ.6705* (943 tons). She then set course for Port Vendres near the Franco–Spanish border. In April the submarines had been given this area as a hunting ground because instructions had been received to attack German trade with Spain.[42] Three merchant ships in particular were known to be engaged in this trade: the *Astrée*, the *Saumur*, and the *Bourges*. The *Astrée* (2,147 tons) was sunk by *Untiring* on 1st May off Port Vendres.

On 1st May, too, *Upstart* bombarded the oil refinery and storage tanks at Oneglia, scoring twenty hits with her 3-inch gun. On 4th May she fired twenty rounds into a railway goods-yard in the harbour at Cannes, and, further south, hit seaplane hangars at St. Raphael twenty-five times. On each occasion coast artillery returned the fire without effect. On 11th May, east of Hyères Roads, *Ultor* sank a *KT* ship, escorted by two S-boats, and on a later occasion engaged a motor coastal vessel of 80 tons with gunfire and drove her to destruction on shore. Some days later *Universal* destroyed an escort vessel which had been beached at La Ciotat (west of Toulon), but a better prize fell to *Upstart* off Port Vendres on 21st May. This was the *Saumur* (2,955 tons), one of the three ships engaged in German trade with Spain. *Upstart* sank her and so only the *Bourges* remained in this employment. On 27th May *Ultor* sighted off Cape Camarat (south of St. Raphael) a 1,000-ton salvage vessel which was towing a 400-ton lighter. Three 'F' Lighters were in company and the escort was composed of three R-boats. *Ultor* attacked from the landward side and sank the salvage vessel, and later, when an R-boat had gone alongside the lighter, sank both with a single torpedo. On 28th May, off La Ciotat, *Ultor* sighted two 150-ton motor minesweepers. Although the coast defence guns on an island nearby were in range, *Ultor* surfaced and engaged the minesweepers with her gun, sinking one, and then withdrew on the surface. This success was the last during May's patrols, which had been quite well rewarded.

During June 10th Submarine Flotilla made eight patrols.[43] The eastern part of the patrolling area, namely from Cape Roux to Cape Mele on the Italian Riviera, was given to the Coastal Forces to increase their opportunities. On 2nd June *Ultor* was in position off Port Vendres and there sank the merchant ship *Alice Robert* (2,588 tons) which had been converted to a minelayer. On 10th June *Untiring*, off Toulon, sank *UJ.6708* (350 tons) which was a converted yacht, *La Havraise*. On 20th June *Ultor* sank an 'F' Lighter off Nice. On 21st June *Universal* sank another *UJ* boat (250 tons), and on 22nd June sighted at anchor off Cassis the *President dal Piaz* (4,929 tons) and the *Sampiero Corso* (3,823 tons), both blockships.

Digitized by Google

Universal sank both, and her 'ship's company were given the rare opportunity of seeing the result of the attack through the periscope'. On 27th June, off Nice, *Ultor* sank the *Cap Blanc* (3,315 tons) which was escorted by three destroyers and a corvette. A few hours later this submarine sank the *Pallas* (5,260 tons) which was escorted by four destroyers, a corvette, two R-boats and two *UJ* boats. Some members of *Ultor's* ship's company saw the results through the periscope. During June *Ultor* (Lieutenant G. E. Hunt) lived up to her name, in English Avenger, because she sank 11,000 tons of shipping and hit with nine out of the sixteen torpedoes which she fired. It is interesting to note the torpedo hits scored by 10th Submarine Flotilla during June:

	Fired	*Hit*
H.M.S. *Ultor*	16	9
Universal	5	5
Untiring	7	2
Upstart	4	–
	32	16

These necessarily shortened accounts of the submarines' operations may have given the impression that the submarines faced no opposition, which would be most misleading. Nearly always the quarry was escorted by anti-submarine vessels, sometimes by aircraft as well, and these had to be out-manoeuvred. When no escort was present, anti-submarine vessels often appeared very soon after attacks because these were so frequently made in coastal waters near harbours or roadsteads where anti-submarine vessels were stationed, which could be very easily called out. The submarines knew well the swift change of role from hunter to hunted.

The Aegean Sea looked different to British and German strategic eyes. After the ill-starred British operations between September and November 1943 which ended with the loss of Cos and Leros and their garrisons, and heavy naval and air force casualties, no further large scale operations were attempted in the Aegean.* The British policy thereafter has been concisely described by Captain Roskill:

> '... we aimed to deny the enemy sufficient control of the Aegean to supply his garrisons in the outlying islands which ... we still hoped to occupy as a preliminary to the final expulsion of the Germans from Greece, and as an inducement to Turkey to enter the war ...'†

* For the operations between September and November 1943 see *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V, Chapter XV.

† Captain S. W. Roskill, R.N.: *The War at Sea*, Volume III, Part II, (H.M.S.O. 1961) p. 76.

Digitized by Google

Turkey, very sensibly in her own interests, sat on the fence. She annoyed the British by turning a blind eye when the Germans sent transports and naval auxiliaries from the Black Sea through the Dardanelles to the Aegean. In January 1944 twenty German vessels made the passage and were a useful windfall for Admiral, Aegean. In May a transport and six armed trawlers passed through, and by the middle of June fifteen more miscellaneous vessels followed. By then the Turks felt that they had gone far enough in pleasing the Germans and, after a strong British protest, refused further passage to German ships. The British protest derived some force from British activities in the Aegean during December of 1943 and the Spring of 1944.[44] About half a dozen British submarines and three Greek of the 1st Submarine Flotilla, based on Malta, constantly patrolled off the harbours of Crete and southern Greece and among the Aegean islands. Because the enemy vessels were usually caiques and naval auxiliaries of various kinds the submarines very often attacked with their guns instead of with torpedoes.

Besides these 'regular' naval forces, the Levant Schooner Flotilla had been formed in the autumn of 1943 by Commander, Coastal Forces, Eastern Mediterranean, to operate with a number of specialised military forces often referred to as 'private armies', then under Commander, Raiding Forces, and responsible to G.H.Q. Middle East.*[45] In the spring of 1944 the raiding forces were being reorganized and on 1st April the Anglo-Hellenic Schooner Flotilla (Lieutenant-Commander A. C. C. Seligman, R.N.R.) was formed which, in addition to the Levant Schooner Flotilla, took command of the Special Boat Squadron and the Greek Sacred Squadron.[46] This measure ensured much better co-operation in the activities of unit commanders who were men of highly independent character and strong will. The tasks of the units which we have mentioned were, generally speaking, alike: to destroy German sea traffic, to raid German island garrisons, to establish observation posts, to collect information, and to obtain the sympathy and interest of various islanders. It was a dashing form of war which gave room for the exercise of initiative, daring and cunning.

In April–June 1944 the views on the Western Allies' intentions for the Aegean which were expressed by and to the German High Command were based on the general assumption that no major operation in the Balkans was being planned by the Western Powers, as this would be unacceptable to the Soviet Union. Voiced by Foreign Armies West on 3rd and 27th April, this opinion was

---

* See *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V, p. 537, 540 and 542 for a description of the various small naval and military forces involved. The reorganization of the military forces will be discussed again in Section (v) of this chapter.

Digitized by Google

reiterated by *OKW's* Operations Branch on 5th May.[47] The belief that the Western Allies would not wish to offend the Russians was applied also to Turkey. Despite Turkey's suspension of deliveries of chrome ore to Germany on 20th April, *FHW* appreciated on the 27th that no grant of concessions to the Western Allies would follow, in case this might displease the Russians who were making potentially menacing gains on the Dniester and Crimean fronts and were approaching the Carpathians.[48]

Nevertheless the assumed retention in Egypt of a number of battle-ready British divisions (three were identified by *FHW* on 20th April, and three to four more by 8th May) suggested that these forces were standing by for landing operations of a strategically limited scope and scale. In April, southern Albania or western Greece were put forward as likely targets. On 5th May, Operations Branch at *OKW* reckoned that small forces from Egypt might land on the Ionian or Aegean Islands, and that this was currently more likely than an Italian-based strike at the Dalmatian Islands. As Soviet disapproval would, it was assumed, preclude development towards Thrace or Bulgaria the prospect of forays in the Aegean did not apparently cause much alarm. On 14th May Operations Branch appreciated that the Ionian Islands could fall to a determined assault, but it considered that *OB Südost* could, if given the requisite air support, defend the Peloponnese and western Greece.[49] The garrisons on the islands could not be reinforced as no troops were available for this purpose; nor were naval reinforcements forthcoming. In conferences with Dönitz between 4th and 6th May Hitler expressed the view that the presence of British divisions in Egypt meant that the Allies might begin their 'invasion' with operations in the area Rhodes–Crete–Peloponnese. His proposal that more U-boats be sent to the Aegean was very coolly received by Dönitz and was not pressed, although the Grand Admiral was warned that the matter would be raised again should 'signs of danger' increase.[50]

The attention of the High Command was soon claimed by the 'signs of danger' which were manifest in Italy, and subsequently in France. *FHW* continued to speculate about the eastern Mediterranean, and on 8th May linked reports that Greece had been declared to be a British sphere of influence to Turkey's evident and growing willingness to conciliate Russia. This produced the theory that a Turkish opening of the Dardanelles to Soviet shipping could provoke the British, alarmed for their vital Mediterranean sea route, into seeking to capture Crete and Rhodes in order to seal off the Aegean before putting forces into southern Greece. On 6th June *FHW* again suggested that a strike at Rhodes from the Middle East might well be the first move in the Allies' opening up of the

Digitized by Google

Aegean, but as we have noted in Chapter VI the assumed transfer to Italy of various formations, hitherto placed in Egypt, set off a new train of theories regarding possible Allied operations in the Adriatic.[51] When Jodl's Operations Branch surveyed the Allies' Mediterranean operations on 9th June, the Aegean figured only as a possible objective for a foray to be staged from the Middle East in support of a strike at the Balkans from Italy, itself equally hypothetical as political considerations were still deemed to be paramount in the south-eastern theatre.[52]

While *OKW* tried to divine future events in the Aegean, those commanders who were directly concerned with that sea—*OB Südost*, Field-Marshal von Weichs; Commander Naval Group South, Admiral Kurt Fricke; Commander of Army Group E (Greece and Aegean), General Löhr; and Admiral Aegean, Vice-Admiral Werner Lange—grappled with everyday problems in moods which varied from gloom and discouragement to hope that they would somehow 'make do'. In accordance with decisions taken by Hitler in September 1943, and amplified in a policy directive issued by *OKW* on 6th October, they were required to hold an outer chain of islands stretching from Corfu, Cephalonia and Zante in the Ionian Sea to Crete and Rhodes, as well as an inner chain which included those of the Cyclades and Dodecanese groups in the Aegean.*[53] There were also outlying garrisons on the Greek mainland to which the sea road was often easier than the land route. All these garrisons and posts had to be maintained with supplies and stores. Unfortunately for the Germans the Allied air forces were now supreme; their aircraft were everywhere on the watch; and the Royal Navy's submarines and Coastal Forces, and the several specialised forces, well informed by air reconnaissance and by observation posts on some islands, might pounce upon German caiques and small vessels anywhere at any time.†

Shipping of this type was reckoned by Admiral Lange to constitute the only practicable means of transporting supplies to the islands and on 27th March he told *OKM* that, if he could count on well-armed ferry barges and caiques fitted with up to date auxiliary engines and if he was given improved facilities for repair, he should be able to fulfil his commitments.[54] His report was said to be under

* The Aegean islands held by the Germans at the end of October 1943 are listed in *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V, p. 548. By 16th November they had conquered Leros and the garrison of Samos surrendered on 22nd November.

† On 27th April Major-General Kreipe, Commander of German Troops in Crete, was kidnapped by Major Patrick Leigh-Fermor of S.O.E. He was hidden among Cretan guerillas until he was spirited away to North Africa in the Coastal Forces' *ML.842* on 14th May.

Digitized by Google

consideration in early April, but as this period saw the German evacuation of Odessa and the loss of several ports in the Crimea, from *OKM's* standpoint the requirements of the Aegean seemed less pressing than those of the Black Sea. The risks entailed in using merchant shipping for supply purposes in the Aegean were underlined by the fate of the *Gertrud* convoy at the beginning of June, and, as we have seen, Lange was then unjustly berated for not employing small ships, a course he had himself advocated. A month later he announced that the supply situation on the islands was very precarious, although he was still hopeful of meeting existing basic requirements.[55] His superior Admiral Fricke, took a gloomier view of German prospects in the event of a determined Allied attempt to break into the Aegean; he reported at the end of June that the combat forces at his disposal were too weak and too few to repel such an attempt, and, if it heralded an enterprise against Greece, all that could be expected of the strongpoints on that coastline and its outlying islands would be 'sacrificial' resistance offered to gain time. Retention of the Aegean was a very irksome commitment for the German naval commands involved.

The 1st Submarine Flotilla moved from Beirut to Malta in February 1944, and maintained patrols in the Aegean with the main object of destroying all German shipping and, in consequence the German sea L. of C.[56] The usual route followed by the submarines to patrols in the Aegean was by the Anticythera Channel between the island of that name and the north-western point of Crete. It was the usual practice for submarines to make the passage through the channel submerged at a depth of 200 feet so as to be under possible minefields. From April 1944 the operations of 1st Submarine Flotilla took place mainly in the Western Aegean with the object of intercepting the traffic between Piraeus and Crete.[57] Sometimes patrols were established in the Central Aegean in order to intercept traffic between Piraeus and the Dodecanese when air reconnaissance or island observation posts reported ships on passage. Patrols in the Northern Aegean were few because the lengthening days and shortening nights of spring and summer meant that too much time was spent on passage to and from patrol.

Our story of operations opens on 3rd April with *Ultor* which had been lent to 1st Submarine Flotilla until 3rd May to carry out two patrols in the Aegean.[58] On 3rd April she sank by gunfire two 80-ton caiques and one of 30 tons in Port S. Nikolo in the island of Cythera. Here too she destroyed a 60-ton caique on the stocks. Her career of destruction on this patrol lasted until 12th April when she sank with a torpedo a 200-ton armed caique which was at anchor off Monemvasia on a southern spur of the Peloponnese. Her total bag was eight

Digitized by Google

caiques, 580 tons in all, for the expenditure of one torpedo and 77 rounds of 3-inch shell.

On 5th April *Ultimatum* sank by gunfire a caique in Suda Bay (Crete), but on 12th April *Unsparing* had no luck when she attacked with torpedoes the ship *Anita* which was bound for Leros from Rhodes, escorted by the torpedo-boats *TA.16* and *TA.19* (the former Italian *Castelfidardo* and *Calatafimi*) and aircraft. On 17th April the Dutch submarine *Dolfijn* sank by gunfire a caique off Milos, and on the same day *Unruly*, off the Doro Channel which lies between Euboea and the island of Andros, unsuccessfully attacked the tanker *Berte* which was on passage from the Dardanelles to Piraeus, escorted by *TA.16*, *TA.17* (*S.Martino*) and *TA.19*, and by aircraft. However, *Unruly* on 19th April sank two caiques west of Chios, one by gunfire and one by demolition charges placed by a boarding party.[59] On 21st April north of Chios she fell in with a suspicious-looking caique which was flying the Greek ensign and displayed Red Cross markings. A boarding party discovered that she was laden with drums of oil consigned to a German recipient and sank her by demolition charges.

The prize of the month fell to the submarine *Sportsman* which was making her tenth and last patrol before returning to the United Kingdom for refit. On 21st April she was ordered to cover the approaches to Heraklion because information had been received that a large French steamer, the *Luxembourg* (5,830 tons), now in German hands, was in Piraeus and about to sail for Crete.[60] On 28th April *Sportsman* sighted the steamer, heavily laden with 5,300 tons of cargo for Crete, approaching from the west, escorted by the ubiquitous *TA.16*, *TA.17* and *TA.19*, the motor minesweeper *R.210*, and 5 *UJ* boats. At one time twelve aircraft were in the field of view of the large periscope. The sea was calm with a slight ripple on an oily swell and the escorts were clearly suspicious, dropping depth charges, but apparently at random. Lieutenant Gatehouse fired two torpedoes at five thousand yards' range and then went deep to avoid a fairly accurate counter-attack and withdrew northwards. The *Luxembourg* was hit and sank, and the senior officer of her escort later reported 'The attack must have been carried out by a daring and experienced British submarine commander who remained at periscope depth and fired, in spite of aircraft bombs and depth-charges'.[61] This success was the last in April, and during the month the submarines sank fourteen caiques, as a rule by gunfire.

On 3rd May *Unswerving* was foiled by the escort when about to attack the merchant ship *Gertrud*, a maddening occurrence because this ship had twice escaped this submarine in March,*[62] and, as

* H.M.S. *Unswerving* was the first on the Mediterranean station to be commanded by an officer of the R.N.V.R., Lieutenant M. D. Tattersall.

Digitized by Google

we have seen, was sunk by aircraft in Heraklion harbour on 2nd June. However on the evening of 3rd May *Unswerving* sank by gunfire two caiques in the approaches to the Gulf of Nauplia, and on the 5th three more. Meanwhile *Ultimatum* on 1st May, sank a caique south-east of Cape Matapan, and then, when her commanding officer learned from a survivor that there was a German controlled yard for building and repairing caiques at Koroni on the south-west point of the Gulf of Kalamata, he decided to pay it a visit. There followed a noisy eighteen minutes during which *Ultimatum's* gun fired 62 rounds and sank two 100-ton caiques, five of various sizes on the slips, and damaged one more.

On 8th May *Sickle* was off the Doro Channel and was prevented by a complete shut-down of fog from attacking the ship *Agathe*. To console herself she later sank one caique by gunfire, one by demolition charges, and one of 20-tons by ramming. She was then ordered to the north coast of Crete, and on 11th May bombarded a radar station perched on a height east of Heraklion. Shore defences returned the fire and Lieutenant Drummond and two ratings were wounded by rifle bullets because the range was little more than a thousand yards, On 13th May *Sickle* stalked and sank a 200-ton armed caique, and then set course for Malta. On 12th May the newly arrived *Vampire* rammed a caique off Monemvasia. In the third week of May *Unsparing* was ordered to make herself known at Cos, and on the 20th bombarded targets on the island. This was the last operation in May which we notice. Curiously, during May as in April, fourteen caiques were sunk, but in addition five were damaged.[68]

June turned out to be a rather barren month. On the 1st *Unruly* sank a caique. On 31st May *Sickle* (Lieutenant J. R. Drummond) left Malta for patrol in the northern Aegean and on 4th June bombarded the harbour of Mytilene. She then turned south-westwards and on 6th June sank the merchant vessel *Reamur* (550 tons) in the Doro Channel. On 12th June *Sickle* reported an enemy convoy in the Steno Pass between Andros and Tenos, and then vanished. It is assumed that she struck a mine. She was the forty-fifth, and the last, British submarine to be lost in Mediterranean operations.

On 9th June *Vivid* sank the merchant vessel *Tanais* (1,454 tons), the only survivor of the *Gertrud* convoy north of Crete. On 14th June *Unswerving* left Malta and on 17th June unsuccessfully attacked two large caiques in Potamo Bay in Anticythera. She was then hunted for three hours by *UJ* boats but escaped, and on the 19th appeared off Chios. On 20th June she dived through Chios Strait between the island and the Turkish mainland, the first submarine ever to dive through these restricted waters. She then turned north-westwards to intercept shipping between Salonika and Skiathos,

Digitized by Google

and on 23rd June sank by gunfire two armed patrol caiques. On 21st June *Unsparing*, off Cape Malea in the south-eastern Peloponnese, sank *UJ.2106* (450 tons) and Siebel Ferry *No.284*. On 23rd June *Vampire* sank a caique by gunfire off Cos, and on 24th bombarded a caique-building yard on Niseros, destroying two large caiques, one beached, and one on the stocks.

Vampire's attack at Niseros was the last during the period covered by this chapter. It may however be fitting to mention the fates of those former Italian torpedo-boats which seem to have been maids of all work in escort duties in the Aegean. *TA.16* (*Castelfidardo*) was sunk in Heraklion harbour by Baltimores of No. 15 Squadron S.A.A.F. and of No. 454 Squadron R.A.A.F. on 2nd June when the air forces were finishing off the survivors of the *Gertrud* convoy. *TA.17* (*S.Martino*) and the larger *TA.14* (*Turbine*) may have been enjoying a short spell of rest in the harbour of Porto Lago in Leros, but there the long arm of the Navy reached them.[64] On 19th June *ML.360* carried to Leros frogmen of the Royal Marines and three canoes. These silently entered the harbour and attached explosive charges ('limpets') to the hulls of the torpedo-boats. The explosions which followed disabled them for the rest of the war. On 9th August the Greek submarine *Pipinos* sank *TA.19* (*Calatafimi*).[65]

From time to time in these histories of the campaigns in the Mediterranean and Middle East we have briefly mentioned the Light Coastal Forces of the Royal Navy. It now seems fitting to say rather more about these small warships, which were so small that most of them were known by numbers and not by name.*

At the period of which now we write, April, May and June 1944, the principal bases of the coastal flotillas were: in the Western Mediterranean, Bastia, Maddalena, and Ischia; in the Adriatic, Brindisi, Bari, Manfredonia, and the island of Vis in the Dalmatian archipelago; and in the Eastern Mediterranean, Alexandria and Beirut.[66] Captain J. F. Stevens R.N. held the appointment of Captain Coastal Forces, Mediterranean, and the Senior Officer Inshore Squadron was Captain N. V. Dickenson R.N. During these months the coastal flotillas were constantly busy as a tabular summary of their operations shows:

---

* One of the exceptions was the 1st Steam Gun Boat Flotilla which included H.M.S. *Grey Goose, Grey Wolf, Grey Seal, Grey Fox, Grey Owl, Grey Shark*. W. Armstrong: *H.M. Small Ships* (London, 1958) p. 137.

Digitized by Google

	Nights of Operations	Contacts with Enemy
Western Mediterranean		
April	19	7
May	22	14
June	19	6
Adriatic		
April	6	Records are incomplete
May	24	8
June	24	8
Aegean		
April		Unrecorded
May		Unrecorded
June	9	2

It was of course obvious that not every patrol would sight an enemy. None the less the smallness of the number of occasions on which contact was made suggests how successful the naval and air forces were in stopping the German sea traffic. The want of statistics for the Aegean is misleading because a number of reports show that the coastal flotillas were constantly active in that sea.

In the Western Mediterranean the coastal forces based on Bastia and Maddalena hunted their prey in coastal waters between the eastern end of the Italian Riviera and Anzio. Many of their engagements were fought in the triangle of sea between Bastia, Leghorn, and Piombino. The Vada Rocks, south of Leghorn and less than two miles offshore, and the island of Capraia, north-west of Piombino, were much used as navigational points of reference. Besides the British forces, the United States Navy's flotillas of PT Boats (Patrol Torpedo Boats) carried on operations, sometimes combining with British forces, and their help, always welcome, was invaluable in one particular. The radar sets in British boats were useful in picking up aircraft but were ineffective in finding surface craft and were useless when the boat was near land. The PT Boats were equipped with much more advanced radar sets which incorporated a circular screen and on this anything that was afloat up to a distance of about ten miles appeared as a blob. Land, too, was clearly shown on the screen, and the position, range and courses of ships could be determined.[67]

In the Adriatic the Germans had gained a fair measure of control of the Dalmatian coast and of the islands of the Dalmatian archipelago.[68] Tito's Partisans however securely held the little island of Vis, and here the Coastal Forces had established an advanced base at the small town and harbour of Komiza. Lieutenant-Commander M. Giles R.N. was Senior Naval Officer Vis, and Captain A. E. P. Welman R.N. was Captain Coastal Forces and ran their bases on the Italian shore of the Adriatic at Brindisi, Bari and Manfredonia. 2nd S.S. Brigade provided boarding parties of one officer and six other ranks for night operations by MTBs and

Digitized by Google

MGBs from 2nd February onwards to reinforce the Royal Naval boarding parties.*[69]

The German's control of the Dalmatian coast and hinterland was by no means complete, and the safest and easiest way of supplying their garrisons was by sea. Most of the traffic was carried on by schooners which were often armed, but 'F' lighters, Siebel ferries, I boats and R boats were also employed. The Coastal Forces' task was to destroy the German coastal traffic and they carried on their operations off a shore which was to all intents hostile, and among '. . . islands. Little ones like haystacks, tiny ones like conning towers, long flat slabs like permanent smoke-streaks, pyramids, cones, and crouching animals'.[70] Many operations began as a grim game of hide-and-seek among these islands.

In the Aegean the light coastal forces were constantly on patrol and operations were carried on by MGBs, MTBs, MLs, and HDMLs. In April the MTBs worked from advanced anchorages in the neighbourhood of Castelrosso island (*Map 20*) and in Turkish waters, keeping watch on the approaches to Rhodes, Leros, and Cos.[71] The HDMLs pushed further north to Mytilene. Unfortunately the luck of the game of hide-and-seek was rarely in and night after night they found nothing to attack. During May their luck did not change and only two caiques were sunk between Rhodes and Simi. June was equally barren although *MTB.309* unsuccessfully attacked two destroyers which were leaving Porto Lago harbour in Leros.

To sum up on the action of submarines and coastal forces, the three months April to June 1944 can now be seen as the penultimate stage in the destruction of German warships and merchant vessels in the Mediterranean. During this period seven U-boats were sunk, namely:

April: *U.455*, *U.421*.
May: *U.371*, *U.731*, *U.616*, *U.960*, *U.453*.

On 1st June there remained eleven boats fit for operations and by the end of September 1944 all had been destroyed.[72] After the end of May 1944 no Allied merchantman was sunk by a U-boat in the Mediterranean. The destruction of the U-boats was the fruit of close co-operation between the naval and air forces, of which Captain Roskill justly writes, (we extend an earlier quotation from him):

---

* The first party went out on 2nd February (1 schooner sunk and 17 P.O.W.s taken) and on 3rd February (2 schooners sunk and 60 P.O.W.s taken) Thereafter they went out nightly.

Digitized by Google

> 'Considerations such as the jealously guarded autonomy of both services, dogmatic views on the correct employment of ships or aircraft; and recital of the limitations of both arms were all, if not forgotten, totally subordinated to the single purpose of destroying the enemy. It may be doubted whether in any other theatre—not even excepting the Atlantic convoy battles—such intimate harmony and such complete fusion was accomplished . . . the excellent results achieved in May 1944 were the reward for the patience and perseverance with which the air and naval commanders pursued their aim . . .'*

The table below sets out the losses of German-controlled merchant vessels in the Mediterranean during our three-month period. In all 135 were sunk; a total tonnage of 197,917. Of these vessels 61, amounting to a tonnage of 63,777, were sunk by air attack, a measure of the lethal power of the air forces in this form of war.

(v)

Since Special Operations are to play an important part in the story of the Balkans it seems helpful, at this point, to describe briefly the forces involved and then to outline their structure of command. The forces employed, to follow General Wilson's own description, may be divided into three categories:[74]

1. *Subversive Forces* whose main task was the sabotage of roads, railways, bridges, telegraphic and telephone systems and installations of various kinds, together with the organization, training and supply of Resistance Forces. Members of these forces worked 'underground' and wore civilian clothes. The British organization was known as the Special Operations Executive; its American counterpart as the Office of Strategic Services.†

2. *Raiding Forces* whose tasks were to attack the more heavily defended targets, (a radar station, an ammunition dump, an airfield) as well as the enemy's means of communication. These men were trained in special methods of approach: for example, coming ashore from submarines or motor launches or parachuting from aircraft. They wore uniform, worked in

---

* Roskill: *The War at Sea* Vol. III Part I, (*op. cit.*) p. 326–7.

† The official birthday of S.O.E. was 19th July 1940. A document of this date, signed by Mr. Neville Chamberlain, stated that on the Prime Minister's authority 'a new organisation shall be established forthwith to co-ordinate all action, by way of subversion and sabotage, against the enemy overseas . . . This organisation will be known as the Special Operations Executive'. The history of the growth of S.O.E. is intricate, and the reader is referred to M. R. D. Foot: *SOE in France* (H.M.S.O. 1966) Chapters I and II.

O.S.S., established by the President when the U.S. was preparing to enter the war, operated under the direction and supervision of the American C.O.S.[75]

Digitized by Google

TABLE IV

Enemy Merchant Shipping Losses in the Mediterranean

April — June 1944

No. of Ships — Tonnage

Month	By Surface Ship		By Submarine		By Air Attack		By Mine		By Other Causes		Total	
April 1944	—	—	2	5,887	14	9,930	1	227	13	2,086	30	18,130
May 1944	—	—	2	5,102	@ 27	28,483	1	142	20	18,317	50	52,044
June 1944	1	350	6	19,364	20	25,364	3	5,754	25	76,911	55	127,743
Total	1	350	10	30,353	61	63,777	5	6,123	58	97,314	135	197,917

@ Includes the *S.S. Asie* for which the weight is given in some documents as 8,561 G.R.T. and in others as 3,561 G.R.T. The higher figure has been used in this table.

Digitized by Google

small groups, and were trained to live on hard rations and what they could pick up, and also in the fieldcraft which enabled them to move unobtrusively across unknown country by day and night. British forces of this type included the Commandos, the Long Range Desert Group, the Small Boat Squadron and the Raiding Support Regiment.

3. *Indigenous Resistance Groups*, varying from bands of a few score guerillas to a large and well organized force such as the Yugoslav Army of National Liberation (YANL) became in its later development.* The strength and efficiency of such groups, Wilson recognised, must depend on the quality of their leadership and the quantity of supplies and equipment available to them.[77]

In July 1941 it had been necessary to bring the independent Special Operations Executive under control of the Minister of State and the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East, to ensure that S.O.E.'s activities were in accord with the strategic policy and plans of the Commanders-in-Chief.[78] When, in December 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided to set up a unified command in the Mediterranean Theatre, the Supreme Commander at A.F.H.Q. was made responsible for all operations in the Balkans, including guerilla and subversive operations, and for establishing an organization for the despatch of supplies to Resistance Groups.[79] Special Operations in the Balkans was at this time controlled by Force 133 (S.O.E.) Middle East, which had already established a forward base under an Advanced Force H.Q. at Bari in Italy. The allotment of forces from the Middle East was not, however, determined by the Combined Chiefs of Staff but was left to the decision of the British and American Chiefs of Staff respectively.

This was not simply an inter-Service matter.[80] The British Government was deeply interested in the political future of Yugoslavia and other Balkan countries—the Prime Minister himself kept a watchful eye on affairs in the Adriatic—and the political side of military measures had to be closely examined by the Foreign Office. Moreover it seemed prudent not to settle the problems before some knowledge of American plans had been gained. So it was not until 2nd March that General Wilson received orders from the Chiefs of Staff to take control of all Special Operations carried out in Yugoslavia and Albania, and to transfer the Senior S.O.E. Officer in the Mediterranean from Cairo to a more central position.

Wilson promoted Major-General W. A. Stawell (of Force 133) to be Commander, Special Operations, Mediterranean Theatre of

---

* This Army is more often referred to in contemporary documents as JANL: in het cyrillic alphabet the 'J' is pronounced like 'Y' as in the English 'Year'.[76]

Digitized by Google

Operations (S.O.M.T.O.).[81] He was to act as technical adviser on such operations throughout the Theatre, to co-ordinate S.O.E. and O.S.S. operations where these forces had *not* been assigned to subordinate commands, and to take control of all Base supply organizations in Italy. Stawell opened his H.Q. at Bari on 12th April.

The operational control exercised by Stawell was in fact limited because direction had been, or was about to be, allotted to the following commands: No. 1 Special Force worked in Italy under control of A.A.I., and Force 163 in southern France under S.H.A.E.F.[82] Force 266 (recently created out of Advanced Force 133 at Bari) for a brief period was responsible to Stawell for Special Operations across the Adriatic but in June, upon the creation of Balkan Air Force Command, this H.Q. was in turn replaced.*[83]

Where means were limited, priorities had to be established and these decisions were usually made at Government level.[84] Of the various Resistance movements which emerged in enemy occupied territory, it was the Yugoslavs' which promised to give 'good and immediate results', to use the words of the British Chief of Air Staff written in July 1943. Hence the agreement of the Allied heads of government at Teheran, in December 1943, that they would give all possible help to the Partisans in Yugoslavia. The importance of other Resistance movements increased as the plans for the Normandy invasion developed. The Maquis were to become the main concern of S.H.A.E.F.†

Provisioning of Resistance forces was carried out by S.O.E. and O.S.S., although no American supplies could be employed for military purposes in the Balkans.[85] The allocation of supplies to be received monthly by each area was decided by the Supreme Allied Commander in conference with the Theatre Commanders. The delivery of supplies to Resistance Groups (after the loss of the Dalmatian coast in the German offensive launched in May 1944) was largely dependent on the air lift provided by M.A.A.F., and hence was subject to two variable factors. Firstly, the weather must be suitable for flying which, particularly during winter and in the mountain country favoured by Partisans, it often was not. Secondly, the total air lift required always exceeded that which could be provided by Special Duty aircraft, and extra supplies could only be

---

* The name Force 133 lived on and, *inter alia*, was responsible for S.O.E. activities in Balkan countries, other than Yugoslavia and Albania, under control of the C.-in-C. M.E.F. As the latter was to point out, in September 1944, the divided control of the Balkan Section must militate against efficiency, particularly when events were moving fast.

† During 'Overlord', the Mediterranean Command allotted the following priority in supplies to Partisans: Yugoslavia, France, North Italy, Albania, other groups.[85]

Digitized by Google

provided to one country at the expense of another. Moreover, by order of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, additional forces (heavy bombers and troop carriers) could not be diverted from their primary mission except in an emergency or when the general strategic conditions allowed. The clearance of landing strips in Yugoslavia greatly facilitated supply operations by allowing the unarmed, unarmoured Dakotas to be employed. Other countries, where no air landings were possible, were dependent for supply on drops by parachute, that is, on smaller deliveries by a much less reliable method.*

No central headquarters so far existed to direct the operations of the British air, land and sea forces on the Adriatic front. The largest ground organization which was directly concerned with operations on the eastern side of the Adriatic was Force 266 at Bari under command of Brigadier H. G. P. Miles.[88] By March 1944 this numbered some 3,800 officers and men, and included a special Ordnance Depot to send supplies of all kinds by sea to the Partisans; a depot to send similar stores and supplies by air; a Parachute Training School to instruct men who had to reach their Balkan destination by dropping from the sky; and training camps and holding centres for officers and men of several nationalities who had business in the Balkans. Brigadier Miles also directed the operations of land forces, for example 2nd S.S. Brigade on Vis.

The Mediterranean Allied Air Forces had important tasks on the Adriatic Front: No. 334 (S.D.) Wing R.A.F., which was under M.A.A.F., was responsible for carrying supplies to the Partisans.[89] By March 1944 the Special Duty aircraft so engaged numbered 113, in contrast with 32 in the summer of 1943. Between April and June 1944 up to 3,100 tons of weapons and supplies were flown to the Partisans, and 5,600 tons were delivered by sea. No. 242 Group R.A.F., from M.A.C.A.F., and the Desert Air Force, from M.A.T.A.F. bore the main burden of supporting the Partisans and British naval and land forces by air attacks. M.A.S.A.F., also could be asked to carry out special tasks.

Naval operations were directed by the Flag Officer Taranto and Adriatic, Rear-Admiral C. E. Morgan. Besides purely naval operations by destroyers and the Coastal Forces, the Royal Navy played an important part in combined operations amongst the Dalmatian Islands. The island of Vis, which is ten miles long and

* During the summer of 1944 M.A.A.F. held that supplies could only be taken to north Italy by long-range combat aircraft such as the Halifax. At the end of July S.D. aircraft could provide a lift of 400 gross tons per month for all areas over 400 miles from Bari. Alexander had requested 800 tons for Partisans in north Italy in August and a little less for September. He received 159 and 186 net tons respectively because, in August, the British Government required A.F.H.Q. to answer the Polish request for supplies to Warsaw. See Chapter XI Sec. ix.[87]

Digitized by Google

four and a half miles wide, had by May 1944 become an armed camp.[90] The island, apart from its value to the Partisans, had developed into the place where Allied supplies for the Resistance, sent by sea in bulk from Italy, were broken down for the Partisans to send forward. The Royal Navy had also established on Vis an advanced base for its light coastal forces.[91] There was thus good reason for making the island safe from attacks from German-held islands like Korcula, Hvar, and Brac and for providing a larger garrison than 2nd Commando which had arrived in January 1944. At the beginning of March 2nd Special Service Brigade (Brigadier T. B. L. Churchill) was sent to Vis, and was followed by other units.*[92] The garrison of Vis was not content with passive defence and carried the war to the enemy. In March the islands of Solta and Hvar had been raided, and on 22nd/23rd May a raid was made on the island of Mljet.[94]

Although the Allied leaders had agreed on the conclusion of the Teheran Conference in December 1943 that the Partisans in Yugoslavia should be given priority, the Russians were then in no position to supply material aid and the United States Government was opposed to military interference in the Balkans.[95] British military interest in the affairs of Yugoslavia, however, persisted and increased in 1944. The reason for the continued British military interest is neatly expressed in a sentence which we extract and antedate from a paper on the war in general which Mr. Churchill gave to his Chiefs of Staff on 25th June.[96] 'At the present stage of the War in Europe, our overall strategic concept should be the engagement of the enemy on the largest scale with the greatest violence and continuity'. To encourage the forces of resistance in Yugoslavia to engage, injure, and contain the German forces of occupation was one practical method of applying Mr. Churchill's overall strategic concept. The affairs of Yugoslavia were however a sideshow of the main campaign in Italy.

In November 1943 the Yugoslav National Committee of Liberation had appointed Tito as Minister for People's Defence and gave him the title of Marshal of Yugoslavia.[97] Tito had thus become, as it were *de jure*, what he already was *de facto*, the head of the National Army of Liberation. This title of National Army of Liberation was

---

* Troops on Vis, May 1944:[93]

2nd S.S. Brigade: No. 2 Commando, No. 40 (R.M.) Commando, No. 43 (R.M.) Commando.
2nd Battalion The Highland Light Infantry
111th Army Field Regiment R.A.
64th H.A.A. Regiment R.A.
31st L.A.A. Regiment R.A.
Detachments Raiding Support Regiment.
37th Beach Group.

Digitized by Google

not simply an honorific because the guerilla bands were rapidly becoming an organized army which nevertheless kept the special strengths and weaknesses of guerilla fighters: formidable, elusive, inured to terrible hardship, but lacking the discipline and experience to sustain regular warfare.

In November 1943 it had become clear to the British that Mihailovic was a double-dealer and they began to think, albeit reluctantly, that they must abandon him and the Cetniks in favour of exclusive aid to Tito and the Partisans. In December 1943 Mihailovic was given a last chance when he was asked to destroy two important viaducts on a main railway line south of Belgrade. Mr. Ehrman describes the result:

> '. . . despite the usual assurances of action, accompanied in this case by an offer to renew discussions with Tito, nothing was done; and at the end of the year the British 'prepared to withdraw their missions as soon as possible'.

For one or another reason the withdrawal was not completed until the end of May.

(vi)

Field-Marshal von Weichs, Commander-in-Chief *Südost*, and his subordinates, by 1943 had come to regard Mihailovic 'with a wary tolerance punctuated by armed reprisals'.[98] They thought that Tito and the Partisans were active and dangerous enemies whom they must exterminate. The German occupation of the western Balkans made it necessary to employ large numbers of troops; at the end of March 1944 something of the order of twenty-seven infantry divisions, eight brigades, and fourteen unbrigaded regiments.[99] Of these fifteen divisions and four regiments were composed of native-born Germans, but the rest were a medley of Bulgars, Croats, Serbs, Bosnian Muslims and *Osttruppen*.* Of the fifteen German divisions, six were unfit for operations in the field because they were composed of garrison units, or were in process of being formed. Of the remaining nine divisions which were fit for service in the field, six were employed in 'coast defence' in Dalmatia, Albania, Greece, Crete, and Rhodes, and three regiments were available for active operations against the Partisans and for protecting communications. The Partisans kept the German field forces very busy not only by attracting formal offensives but also by constant pinpricks. For instance, the German Admiral Adriatic, Vice-Admiral

* *Osttruppen* units were at first composed of non-Russian prisoners of war from the Russian Army. Later, deserters also were accepted.

Digitized by Google

Joachim Lietzmann, had placed his headquarters very suitably near Fiume, but the Partisans cut his telephone and telegraph lines so persistently that he and his staff retired to Udine, out of the Partisans' reach but a long way from the sea.[100]
See Map 13.

At the end of April 1944 and in early May *OKW* and von Weichs prepared a major offensive against the Partisans on a new and well conceived plan. They intended to destroy Tito's headquarters, which they correctly located near Drvar in western Bosnia, and to kill or capture Tito.[101] They believed, rightly, that a partial success would throw the central command of the Partisans out of gear, and that complete success would destroy it. On 25th May a battalion of SS parachute troops was to drop on Drvar and almost simultaneously units of the Brandenburg Division would arrive at Drvar as an immediate back-up force. Five other battle groups were to converge on Drvar from Bihac in the north, from Jajce in the east, from Livno in the south-east, and from Knin in the south. The *Luftwaffe* would provide air cover. The operation was named *Rösselsprung* (the Knight's move in chess) and was also known as the Seventh Offensive.

Rösselsprung began promisingly on 25th May. The SS parachute battalion dropped at Drvar and the Brandenburg units formed their cordon. But Tito was just, and only just, too quick for them. Two Yugoslav 'divisions' were at hand and these drew the German troops into savage engagements on the thickly wooded heights. Tito and his staff escaped by scrambling up a cliff, and then, with some difficulty, made their way southwards. Behind them the battle continued as the converging German battle groups closed in. By 6th June the operation was over. von Weichs had little to show for it, except to claim that Tito had been driven from his lair, that his headquarters had been dispersed, and that heavy casualties had been inflicted on his troops.[102] These claims were valid. Tito's headquarters had been scattered and his main signal centre had been destroyed. He and his staff were forced to seek safer surroundings than the mainland could afford and during the first week in June Allied aircraft flew them to Bari. (The Marshal himself travelled in a Russian-manned aircraft and the main evacuation was carried out by U.S. Dakotas of 60th Troop Carrier Group, which also brought out 118 wounded.)[103] H.M.S. *Blackmore* then carried them to Vis where they landed on 6th June.[104] Here they remained for three and a half months.

Although this was a critical moment in the Italian offensive as the break out from Anzio was launched on 23rd May, M.A.C.A.F. gave support to the Partisans by striking repeatedly at German airfields, troops and their communications in the battle area.[105]

Digitized by Google

Thus on 25th May a few Spitfires attacked transport at places widely separated—Bihac and Mostar. On 26th May 36 Fortresses and some Spitfire fighter-bombers destroyed four German He. 126s in the air and on the ground at Zemunik airfield, east of Zadar. On 28th May 12 Marauders and 12 Baltimores of the Desert Air Force dropped 31 tons of bombs on Livno; 50 Lightnings from M.A.S.A.F. attacked transport in the large quadrilateral Bihac–Banja Luka–Livno–Knin; and 45 other Lightnings attacked four airfields. The bag included three aircraft and three gliders. On 29th May 294 Liberators dropped 499 tons of bombs on German troops in the quadrilateral Bihac–Bos.Novi–Banja Luka–Knin. On 30th May 55 Fortresses dropped 83 tons of bombs on the marshalling-yard at Zagreb, and 60 Baltimores and 6 Marauders from the Desert Air Force dropped 52 tons on rail and road targets at and near Drvar. On 31st May 24 Marauders and 34 Baltimores of the Desert Air Force attacked roads at Banja Luka and Mrkonjicgrad, dropping 69 tons of bombs.

Direct Allied naval and army support was not developed so quickly. When *Rösselsprung* began Tito issued a general order to Partisan units to stage immediate diversionary attacks on the nearest German garrisons. Owing to his disrupted signal communications this order did not reach 26th Partisan 'Division' on Vis until 31st May, and with it Tito's request that British forces on the islands would co-operate.[106] Time was short therefore, and a plan had to be made quickly in a series of conferences. We give the account of this relatively minor action in some detail as an example of the type of fighting which took place on the Dalmatian coast.

The nearest German garrison of any size was on the island of Brac (*see Map 17*) and consisted of two battalions of 118th Jäger Division and two batteries of 668th Artillery Regiment: a total strength of more than 1,000 men, 8 10.5-cm guns and 3 of 7.5-cm calibre.[107] The positions held by this force were well known because Partisan spies were accustomed to pass between Vis and Brac at will. There were four positions known to the British as follows:

Main Position. In the centre of the island, consisting of strongpoints, some in concrete, surrounded by belts of wire and antipersonnel mines. The garrison consisted of 500 men with 4 x 10.5-cm guns.

East Position. At the eastern end of the island, of the same nature and strength as Main Position.

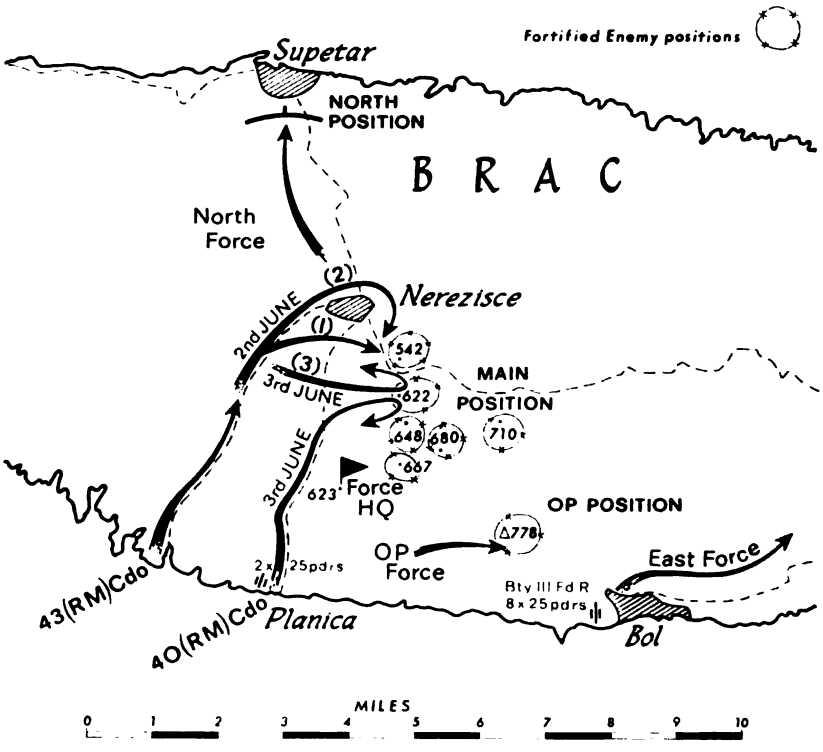
North Position. On the north coast, consisting of fixed works like those in *Main* and *East*, held by 280 men with 3 x 7.5-cm guns.

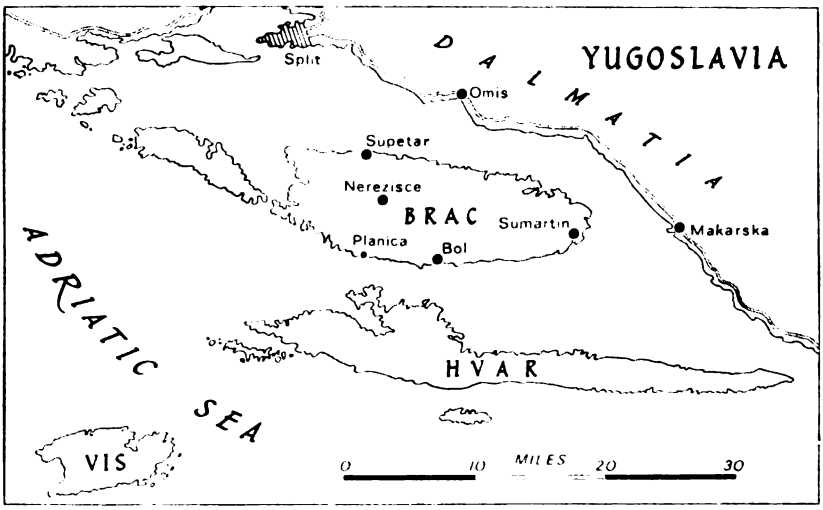
O.P. Position (Pt 778). A hill overlooking the southern beaches held by 20 men.

Digitized by Google

Map 17

2nd S.S. BDE IN THE ATTACK ON BRAC 2nd - 4th JUNE 1944





Digitized by Google

The Allied expeditionary force to attack these positions numbered, including the British contingent, about 4,500 men with 8 25-pdr guns and 8 of 75-mm or lesser calibre.* Most of the Partisans embarked in their own schooners and caiques, and for the remainder Lieutenant-Commander Giles assembled eight infantry landing craft (L.C.I.), one tank landing craft (L.C.T.), a few assault landing craft (L.C.A.), two motor fishing vessels, two motor launches, and 20 Partisan schooners and caiques. Lieutenant K. J. Webb R.N.R. was the senior naval officer afloat and was to direct the landings on Brac. The sea passage was about twenty miles.

The plan in outline was as follows. D day was 2nd June. 'O.P. Force' and 'North Force' would cross to Brac during the night 31st May/1st June, and lie up during 1st June. Then in the small hours of 2nd June 'O.P. Force' would capture *O.P. Position*, and 'North Force' would capture *North Position*. During the night 1st/2nd June three other Forces would cross, namely 'Main Force', 'East Force', and the supporting artillery. The tasks of these forces are suggested by their names: 'Main Force' to capture the enemy *Main Position;* 'East Force' to form a block and contain the enemy on the eastern end of the island; the combined Force headquarters was to establish itself south-west of the main objective.[109] Air support would be provided by No. 242 Group R.A.F. and M.A.S.A.F.'s heavy day bombers. At 6 a.m. on 2nd June fighters, carrying rocket projectiles, of No. 242 Group R.A.F., would attack *Main Position* in order to destroy the German guns if possible. Thereafter fighters would answer calls for direct support passed by an R.A.F. liaison officer with 'Main Force'. Fighters also would maintain patrols over Brac at intervals by day and night. Fifteenth U.S. Army Air Force undertook to bomb Split, Omis, and Makarska, three harbours on the mainland from which German reinforcements might sail for Brac.

---

* Force Commander: Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. T. F. Churchill (of 2nd Commando, in absence of Brigade Commander in U.K.). A Combined Force H.Q. was formed of H.Q. 2nd S.S. Brigade and 26th Partisan Division Y.A.N.L.[108]

North Force:	500 Partisans.
O.P. Force:	Company 2nd Battalion The Highland Light Infantry.
	30 Partisans.
East Force:	O.S.S. Operational Group.
	700 Partisans.
	Section 2nd Battalion The Highland Light Infantry (carriers).
	Section 101st L.A.A. Battery R.A. (2 x 47/32-mm guns).
	Troop R.S.R. (4 x 75-mm guns).
Main Force:	43 (R.M.) Commando (Lieutenant-Colonel R. W. B. Simonds)
	Heavy Weapon Troop 40 (R.M.) Commando.
	Section R.S.R. (2 x 47/32-mm guns).
	1300 Partisans.

Supporting fire to be given by 111th Field Regiment R.A. (8 x 25-pdrs) with Troop of Partisan Artillery (75-mm guns).

Digitized by Google

The Royal Navy undertook to land and withdraw all the Forces, and to protect them from interference by the enemy's warships on passage and during the operation. By day the task would be carried out by motor torpedo-boats, motor gunboats, and motor launches, but during each night two destroyers would join the patrols.

We have given the plan and the forces engaged to make it clear that the operation was a large raid and not a 'tip and run' affair by a small force. The story of the raid however can be shorn of detail.[110] All the Forces crossed to Brac safely and landed without opposition by early on 2nd June. In the small hours of that morning 'North Force' surrounded and isolated *North Position* but could not break in, and therefore maintained their cordon until 4th June. The Highland Light Infantry found *O.P. Position* to be a very tough nut: a concrete bunker on top of a sheer face, with wire and mine-belts below. Twice they attacked and each time found themselves at length scrabbling on the rock face under intense cross fire. The company commander, who with five other officers had been wounded and had been dragged back with great difficulty, then saw that the German O.P. party was certainly neutralized because no shells were dropping among the troops who were landing on the beaches which were clearly visible under a bright moon. He decided to risk no more lives in a third attack, but to harass the O.P.s until daylight and then to ask for an air strike, so that he could rush the position.

With 'East Force' all went well and by the morning of 3rd June they had cornered the enemy in a small area around Sumartin at the eastern end of the island. The fortunes of 'Main Force' were very different because the garrison of *Main Position* offered a stubborn and skilful defence, and withstood six attacks in all. The position was composed of six strongpoints of which four came under attack: Points 542, 622, 648 and 667 in that order north to south. At 6.10 a.m. rocket-firing Hurricanes successfully attacked *Main Position*, temporarily silencing the guns, and No. 43 (R.M.) Commando then advanced against the west side of Pt 542, while Partisan units attacked Pt 667. By 7.30 a.m. the Marines reached the enemy's mine-strewn wire and for thirty minutes struggled to cut a gap under heavy fire but in vain. At 8 a.m. Colonel Simonds withdrew his men in order to stage a second attack from the north. The Partisans had had no better luck in their attack. The next plan was for the Partisans with all available guns in support and after an air strike to attack Pts 622 and 648 later in the morning, and for the Marines and a Partisan battalion to attack Pt 542 during the afternoon with the same artillery and air support.

While these attacks were being staged the R.A.F. fighters attacked *O.P. Position* which the H.L.I. and a Partisan platoon then rushed.

Digitized by Google

The fight for this position cost the H.L.I. four officers and eleven men killed and wounded, and the Partisans about the same number.

Later in the morning the R.A.F. fighters made another effective attack on *Main Position*. The Partisans then dashed in only to be stopped once again by the wire and mines. It therefore became necessary to depend upon the second phase of the plan: in this the artillery would begin a thirty-minute bombardment on *Main Position* at 4 p.m., and at 4.30 p.m. the Royal Marines would attack Pt 542 from the north and the Partisans would attack from the south. All seemed to be going well and by 4.15 p.m. three troops of Marines were in position. The commander of the Partisan battalion suddenly announced that he would not attack. The Marines, less than 150 strong, very gallantly attacked alone and at 4.45 p.m. were slowly hacking a gap through the wire, when Colonel Simonds, rightly judging the attempt to be hopeless, stopped the operation and withdrew his men under cover of a smoke-screen. The Partisans then surprisingly volunteered a night attack but this also failed.

Meanwhile Colonel Churchill had asked Brigadier Miles, who was on Vis, to send over three troops of No. 40 (R.M.) Commando (Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Manners), two 25-pdr guns, 50 tons of ammunition and other supplies, and any Partisans whom he could find. These reinforcements landed on Brac at 3.45 a.m. on 3rd June.

On 3rd June Colonel Churchill made a long reconnaissance and at 2 p.m. returned with a simple plan. The gist of this was that both Commandos would attack Pt 622 at dusk while the Partisans neutralized Pts 542 and 648 by fire. Once Pt 622 had been captured, the Partisans would attack Pts 542 and 648. From this point everything went wrong. After three hours of discussion the Partisans refused to attack and Churchill decided that the Royal Marines alone would attack at 9.15 p.m. Unfortunately a mistake in decoding a signal led No. 43 (R.M.) Commando to think that it was to attack alone, while an officer who was carrying the orders to No. 40 (R.M.) Commando lost his way and disappeared. At 9.15 p.m. 43rd Commando attacked, blasted their way through the wire with Bangalore torpedoes and captured Pt 622 a few minutes before 10 p.m. Half an hour later the enemy counter-attacked in strength, and at 10.30 p.m. Simonds, believing himself to be alone and having lost touch with Churchill, decided to withdraw before his men were decimated. Churchill had heard nothing from No. 40 (R.M.) Commando and at 7.45 p.m. had decided to go forward to brief it and lead its attack. All this took time and it was not until 10 p.m. that the Commando attacked and reached Pt 622 just as its sister Commando withdrew. No. 40 pressed on, captured Pt 622, and was furiously counter-attacked. A tremendous fight followed in which

Digitized by Google

Churchill and Colonel Manners, commander of No. 40, disappeared. Major Maude then took over but, after beating off the counter-attack, decided that his position was not tenable and withdrew. It was grimly ironic that the Marines had twice captured Pt 622, only to abandon it.

Meanwhile Brigadier Miles's liaison officer returned to Vis to report on the situation on Brac.[111] Brigadier Miles, Commander Giles, and the Partisan leader, Commander Cerni, decided to have all available craft ready to evacuate the force on Brac at any time from 8 a.m. on 4th June. The decision to evacuate remained with the Force Commander who was now Colonel Simonds, owing to the disappearance of Colonel Churchill.* Early on 4th June Simonds conferred with Lieutenant Webb R.N.R. and the Partisan commander, reviewing the situation in the light of an estimate of casualties. British losses amounted to a total of 146 killed, wounded and missing.[112] The Partisans had lost perhaps 60 killed and 200 wounded. They decided that as large a diversion as practicable had been made and that to continue the operation would be to throw lives away for nothing. Simonds then rightly ordered evacuation forthwith. This was successfully accomplished although the removal of the wounded was difficult because the paths to the beaches were rough and steep. Many owed their lives to the small medical detachment which worked tirelessly until every wounded man had been embarked.† The Allied air forces helped as well. On 3rd June 74 Liberators from M.A.S.A.F. dropped 119 tons of bombs on Split and Omis, nearby on the mainland, while 54 Baltimores from D.A.F. dropped 46 tons on the harbours at those places.[114] These operations to interfere with the arrival of German reinforcements were extended to the railway leading to Split by a dozen Spitfires, while another dozen supported operations against Brac itself.

To assess the value of the raid we must go to German records.[115] According to these, German casualties were 20 killed and 46 wounded. On 4th June the Naval Group South appreciated that the Allies were determined to open and hold a supply route to the mainland near Split, and Vice-Admiral Lietzmann (Admiral Adriatic) was ordered to bring his light coastal forces into action, and to arrange for the *Luftwaffe* to co-operate. The Allies' withdrawal from Brac made these measures unnecessary, but the Germans

---

* Lieutenant-Colonel Churchill had been taken prisoner. Lieutenant-Colonel Manners had been killed in the fight on Pt 622. Both had remained on the highest point of the objective.

† Between 5th and 11th June attempts to rescue prisoners from Brac were made by Captain R. W. Keep, and Lieutenants M. H. Webb and I. M. Mollison with detachments of 2nd Commando.[113] They were supported by MGBs led by Lieutenant-Commander T. Fuller R.C.N.V.R. Spitfires from No. 242 Group R.A.F. took a hand also.

Digitized by Google

nevertheless reinforced Brac with units from 264th Infantry Division and with a battalion of 7th S.S. Mountain Division which was withdrawn from *Rösselsprung*. The British could claim that these diversions and the demonstration of the Allies' power to strike hard at an island held by a strong German garrison were their gains from the raid on Brac, but the Germans naturally took the opposite view. In the *OKW* War Diary it only rated 20 lines which drew attention to the 'exceptionally low' German casualties and concluded that this defensive success 'would have a deterrent effect on any plans the enemy might entertain for further offensives in this area'.

(vii)

Co-operation between the air, land and sea commanders, who directed operations across the Adriatic, although *ad hoc*, was very satisfactory. This was shown in an investigation carried out on behalf of A.F.H.Q. in May.[116] Nevertheless the Prime Minister felt that the command should be better organized. He signalled, requesting Wilson's views on 22nd April, and put his own suggestions for a unified command to the Chiefs of Staff. For their part, the Mediterranean Commanders-in-Chief had come to a similar conclusion when considering plans for very much larger operations across the Adriatic in the event of any German weakening or withdrawal and for a small landing in Dalmatia, which would allow supplies to be pushed through to the interior and would extend the range of fighter-bombers to cover all Yugoslavia.[117] These plans included the establishment of a headquarters to handle regular forces. Air Marshal Slessor in particular felt, as he wrote to General Wilson, that it was 'high time we put our house in order as far as concerns the higher direction and control of operations across the Adriatic . . .'.[118] He was in fact in the process of forming a headquarters to control all air operations across the Adriatic.

General Wilson was able to discuss Slessor's proposals for a 'Trans-Adriatic Command at Bari under a Senior Air Force Officer' with the Chiefs of Staff, when he visited London early in May.[119] He advised against the combined Adriatic–Aegean command proposed by Mr. Churchill on the grounds that the Aegean was the responsibility of the Middle East. He preferred to consult with his fellow commanders again before setting down his scheme in writing.

It was not until 20th May that Wilson signalled the full details of the new Command to London, when, because there might be 'high questions of inter-service policy involved', he requested the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.*[120] The proposed directive

* No further communication ensued until the American C.O.S. received a copy of the final directive.

Digitized by Google

was clearly set out but its introduction gave the British Chiefs of Staff, or at least the First Sea Lord, Sir Andrew Cunningham, some cause for doubt:

> 'It involves', General Wilson declared, 'no change in the system of command and co-ordination of amphibious operations which has been proved in this Theatre to work well. It merely applies to operations across the Adriatic the principle which has applied to all other operations in this Theatre, namely that of three co-equal Commanders of whom one is charged with the co-ordination of planning and of the execution of subsequent operations. In this case the co-ordinator is the Airman. I think it appropriate that this should be so since Air Forces must have the major part in any operations undertaken across the Adriatic'.

The Chiefs of Staff, when they considered Wilson's proposals the following day, felt that this was not the plan which had been put to them previously—then it had concerned the establishment of a command, now it was a co-ordinating authority—and they referred the message to the Joint Planning Staff for further examination.[121] The J.P.S., reporting on 31st May, were in favour of the system of command proposed; the only weakness which they could observe was that naval and air headquarters would not be in the same place.[122] The main objection was to be raised on behalf of the Royal Navy, similar fears being expressed by the First Sea Lord and by the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean.[123] As argued by Sir Andrew Cunningham, the proposed directive did not make it clear whether the future Commander would be responsible for '*the execution* or *for co-ordinating the execution* of all forms of operation . . . The latter term was so vague that it might be construed to mean anything and the Navy could never allow control of operations at sea to pass from the Naval Commander-in-Chief'.[124]

When, therefore, the Chiefs of Staff signalled to Wilson on 10th June giving formal permission for the immediate establishment of Balkan Air Force Command, they asked that its directive should be clarified in two respects: that the Naval and Army Commanders were ultimately responsible to the Supreme Allied Commander through their respective Commanders-in-Chief, and that the three service commanders responsible for trans-Adriatic operations should all have their headquarters in the same place.[125]

Events in the Adriatic had not waited on the Chiefs of Staff's decision and by the end of May the German counter-offensive (*Rösselsprung*) was in full swing. General Wilson visited Bari on 31st May and stopped at Caserta on his way back to A.F.H.Q. to send an urgent signal to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.[126] He asked for the Chiefs of Staffs' approval of the new headquarters and the appointment of a good Commander, 'earliest possible'. The

Digitized by Google

situation in Yugoslavia made 'it most important for maximum possible air support in close co-operation with supply dropping to be continued over prolonged period, in order to sustain morale of Tito's forces'. Sir Alan Brooke replied the next day, giving permission for the establishment of the headquarters (with certain reservations), and stated that authority was being sought to post Air Vice-Marshal Elliot from Gibraltar to take command.[127] Thus the new headquarters, Balkan Air Force, was created, and Air Vice-Marshal W. A. Elliot was appointed to its command. On 15th June A.F.H.Q. gave Elliot a directive of which we quote parts and summarize the rest below.[128]

The new headquarters was established to obtain full co-ordination in operations across the Adriatic, by the following Forces:

Air Forces. The regrouping of Air Force Units to form the Balkan Air Force was in hand, and the Air Commander-in-Chief M.A.A.F. would issue instructions about the role and organization of this air force.

Naval Forces. Those which were assigned to Adriatic operations under the command of the Flag Officer, Taranto.

Ground Forces. All land forces and raiding forces (other than special S.O.E. and O.S.S. units) which had formed part of Force 266, were placed under command of Land Forces Adriatic.

The Yugoslav National Army of Liberation under Marshal Tito. This was described as 'a partner of the first importance in Balkan operations' and liaison with it was to be maintained through the Mission led by Brigadier Maclean, who was the Supreme Allied Commander's representative with Marshal Tito.

After this preamble there followed instructions to the Commander Balkan Air Force:

'4. You will be responsible for ensuring the co-ordination both of the planning and of the conduct of combined amphibious operations and raids by Allied air, sea and land forces on the islands and eastern shores of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas . . .

6. The primary object of combined trans-Adriatic operations will be to contain and destroy as many enemy forces as possible in the Balkans and Greece. It is the intention to increase the scope of these operations as opportunities occur by the establishment of forward air and ground bases on the Dalmatian coast.

7. Should suitable conditions arise in the Balkans it is the intention to open a channel of large-scale supply to Marshal Tito . . .

8. You will afford the greatest measure of support to Y.N.A.L. and, in conjunction with Brigadier Maclean, will effect such co-ordination as may be possible of Partisan operations in the

Digitized by Google

islands and on the mainland with Allied air, sea, and land (including airborne) forces'.

The system of joint command was to be used in operations across the Adriatic. The Supreme Allied Commander would give directives to the Commander of B.A.F., and the Intelligence Staffs would provide information. The Commander was to ensure co-operation between the Services in planning and executing operations, and was to devise procedure. He was given an inter-service secretariat and was to set up a combined operations room, intelligence centre, and intercommunication centre for the use of himself and of representatives of the Flag Officer Taranto, the Commander Land Forces Adriatic, Brigadier Maclean, and Special Operations Groups. Representatives of the British Resident Minister at A.F.H.Q. and of the United States Political Adviser were appointed to give the Commander B.A.F. political advice.

Beside the Commander Balkan Air Force stood the commanders of the land and naval forces, each responsible to the Commander-in-Chief of his own Service although under the co-ordinating control of the Commander Balkan Air Force. Very naturally the Commander B.A.F. commanded the air component and he received directives for air operations direct from the Air C.-in-C. M.A.A.F., to whom he was accountable for the conduct and efficiency of air operations in the Balkans other than those which were carried out by M.A.S.A.F.*[129] He was responsible too for the conduct and efficiency of the operations of aircraft which were engaged in Special Duties in Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Italy. These Special Duties, in a nutshell, were the support of Resistance Movements, and of S.O.E. and O.S.S. specialized troops. Table V at the end of this chapter gives the air Order of Battle of B.A.F. on 31st July 1944, by which date it was a 'going concern'.†

A directive from A.F.H.Q., dated 15th June 1944, brought Land Forces Adriatic into being, and gave instructions to its Commander.[131] This officer was Brigadier G. M. O. Davy, who had been

* Headquarters of B.A.F. was at Bari; in the same building were headquarters of L.F.A., of Force 399, and a representative of Maclean's Mission. Air Commodore L. F. Sinclair was Senior Air Staff Officer at H.Q. B.A.F.; Captain I. H. R. Black R.N. was Naval Liaison Officer. Colonel J. R. J. Macnamara was Chief of Staff at H.Q. L.F.A. Headquarters B.A.F. with its small inter-Service secretariat, inter-Service Intelligence and Planning Sections, and centralized Signals unit, was like a miniature G.H.Q.[130]

† The A.O.C. M.A.C.A.F. continued to be responsible through No. 242 Group R.A.F., and in co-operation with the Flag Officer Taranto and Adriatic, for the protection of shipping in the Adriatic Sea, and for air reconnaissance over that sea, and for anti-submarine operations and for air/sea rescue there.

The A.O.C. M.A.T.A.F. continued to be responsible through the Desert Air Force for attacks on the German L. of C. in the Adriatic, but the Desert Air Force's area of responsibility was restricted to west of a line drawn from Fiume to Ancona. It had no responsibilities east of that line.

Digitized by Google

both an artillery and a cavalry officer, and who had gained a knowledge of Balkan affairs when he was Director of Military Operations at G.H.Q. Middle East in 1942 and 1943. He was to be responsible to A.F.H.Q.

> '. . . in conformity with the policy of the Supreme Allied Commander contained in instructions to the Commander, Balkan Air Force, for:
> (a) Control of land forces engaged in raiding operations across the Adriatic and Ionian Seas from exclusive Istrian Peninsula to inclusive Peloponnese, provided that any operations in Greece will be co-ordinated with Middle East.
> (b) Co-ordination direct with Commander of the Partisan Forces on Vis for the purpose of raiding operations in the Dalmatian area.
> (c) The ground defence of Vis and such other forward air, ground, and naval bases as may be established . . . within the sphere of your responsibility, and for effective co-ordination with Partisan Garrisons . . .'*

Force 266 ceased to exist on 15th June, but Force 399 was formed from its S.O.E./O.S.S. Staff, and was under control of the Commander B.A.F. for special operations.[132] The Order of Battle Land Forces Adriatic on 15th June 1944 is at Table VI at the end of this chapter.

No special directives were issued to or by the Flag Officer Taranto and Adriatic who detailed naval forces and commanders as required. He did however place a Captain R.N. in H.Q. B.A.F. who acted more as naval Chief of Staff than a liaison officer.

Brigadier Maclean's Mission was named No. 37 Military Mission and was given that equivalent of a respectable woman's 'marriage lines', a War Establishment. Part of a directive from A.F.H.Q. dated 22nd June, ran as follows:[133]

> '1. Brigadier Maclean is the Supreme Allied Commander's representative with Marshal Tito. As such he is responsible to the Supreme Allied Commander and has direct access to him . . .
> 2. In all matters not requiring the intervention of the Supreme Allied Commander, Brigadier Maclean will deal with the Air Officer Commanding Balkan Air Force, and, in political matters, with the Bari representative of the British Resident Minister, A.F.H.Q. . . .
> 4. Brigadier Maclean's duties will be:
> (i) To provide liaison between Marshal Tito and (a) the Supreme Allied Commander, (b) the A.O.C. Balkan Air Force, (c) all other British military or civil authorities.

---

* A.O.C. B.A.F. in conjunction with the Flag Officer Taranto and Adriatic was responsible for the air defence of Vis.

Digitized by Google

(ii) To make recommendations to the A.O.C. Balkan Air Force, after consultation with Marshal Tito, for Allied support of all kinds to the Yugoslav Army of National Liberation.

(iii) To report regularly on the military and political situation in Yugoslavia'.

TABLE V

Order of Battle of the Balkan Air Force[134]
as at 31st July 1944

(fully operational units only)

*Formation**		*Aircraft*
No. 334 (S.D.) Wing		
No. 148 (S.D.) Squadron		Halifax II/V/Lysander IIIA
No. 1586 (Polish) Flight (S.D.)		Halifax II/IIA Liberator III
No. 1 (S.D.) Squadron	I.A.F.	S.M.82
No. 88 (S.D.) Squadron	I.A.F.	Cz. 1007
No. 281 Wing		
No. 253 Squadron (S.E.F.)		Spitfire VC
No. 249 Squadron (S.E.F.)		Spitfire VC
No. 32 Squadron (S.E.F.)		Spitfire VC/B/VIII/IX
No. 102 Squadron (S.E.F.) I.A.F.		M.C. 202
No. 155 Squadron (S.E.F.) I.A.F.		M.C. 205
No. 254 Wing		
No. 13 (Hellenic) Squadron (L.B.)		Baltimore IV/V
No. 39 Squadron (T.E.-F(C))		Beaufighter X (R.P.)
No. 213 Squadron (S.E.F.)		Mustang III
On temporary 'S.D.' with B.A.F.		
U.S. 60th Group		
10th, 11th, 12th and 28th Squadrons (T.C.)		Dakotas I/III
Under direct control of B.A.F. H.Q.		
One Flight detached from No. 267 Squadron, R.A.F. M.E.(T)		Dakota

Additional squadrons transferred in August.[135]

The following five squadrons were transferred to B.A.F. Command during August:

No. 6 Squadron (S.E.F.)	Hurricane IV (R.P.)
No. 16 (S.A.A.F.) Squadron (T.E.-F(C))	Beaufighter X (R.P.)
No. 19 (S.A.A.F.) Squadron (T.E.-F(C)) (ex No. 227 Squadron R.A.F.)	Beaufighter M.(R.P.)
No. 352 (Yugoslav) Squadron (S.E.F.(F.B.))	Spitfire VC
No. 25 (S.A.A.F.) Squadron (L.B.)	Ventura I

For fn. see opposite

Digitized by Google

R.A.F. Regiment.

A Wing comprising one Field and two L.A.A. Squadrons were also placed under the operational (and administrative) control of B.A.F., as was an Ammunition Park.[136]

Locations.[137]

Normally all except S.D. aircraft operated from strips near Termoli (Canne, Biferno and Nuovo). S.D. aircraft operated from Brindisi and Lecce.

Russian Air Force Detachment.[138] (Co-ordinated operations with B.A.F.)

Force of 12 Dakota aircraft and 12 Yak fighters.

The Russian Air Group began to operate from Bari on the night of 21st/22nd July and completed the transfer to Belgrade airfield by early December 1944. The supplies which they delivered were in fact largely provided by the British. During this period the R.A.G. made a total of 678 sorties, in which they delivered 738 net tons of supplies and evacuated 2,100 Partisan wounded.

TABLE VI

Land Forces Adriatic

Outline Order of Battle 15th June 1944[139]

Force Troops:

A Squadron, Long Range Desert Group
2nd S.S. Brigade (Brigadier T. B. L. Churchill):
40th (R.M.) Commando
43rd (R.M.) Commando
2nd Commando
9th Commando
Raiding Support Regiment:
Troop B Battery (3-inch mortars)
C Battery (20-mm A.A.)
D Battery (A/tk)
E Battery (75-mm howitzers)

Infantry:

2nd Battalion Highland Light Infantry

F.B.	—	Fighter-bomber
S.D.	—	Special Duties
S.E.F.	—	Single-engine fighter
L.B.	—	Light bomber
T.E.-F(C)	—	Twin-engine fighter, Coastal version
T.C.	—	Troop Carrier
T.	—	Transport
I.A.F.	—	Co-belligerent Italian Air Force

Digitized by Google

Royal Artillery:
111th Army Field Regiment
64th Heavy A.A. Regiment
31st Light A.A. Regiment
567th Independent Searchlight Battery

Royal Engineers:
579th Army Field Company

Signals:
Detachment, 1st L. of C. Royal Signals

20th Beach Group.

R.A.M.C.:
2nd Field Hospital

United States Forces:
Detachment Operational Group O.S.S.
Detachment 21st Engineer Aviation Regiment

Most of the units of L.F.A. were stationed on the island of Vis. The total strength of L.F.A. was about 5,790 all ranks.

Note: The second squadron of L.R.D.G. and the Small Boat Squadron (later named the Small Boat *Service*) joined during August, to meet L.F.A.'s requirements for more troops suited to reconnaissance and harassment by raiding.[140]

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN ITALY FROM THE FALL OF ROME TO THE FIRST BATTLES OF THE GOTHIC LINE (JUNE 1944 — SEPTEMBER 1944)

(i)

THE business of administration is ceaseless because forces in the field must be maintained whether they are engaged in operations or at rest. In the military sense to maintain a force means to keep it complete in personnel, material, and, in Italy, in animals as well. In Volume V of the Mediterranean and Middle East series of histories we gave an account of the early days of British administration in the Italian campaign, and in this volume an outline of the administrative preparations for Alexander's Spring offensive.* We must now continue the account of the administration of the British forces during the advance from Rome to the Gothic Line. A short recapitulation of the earlier story may not come amiss.

The subject is too large for a full account within our space, and too intricate for a summary. We cannot follow Wellington's maxim that 'it is very necessary to attend to all this detail, and to trace a biscuit from Lisbon into the man's mouth on the frontier'.† Therefore we offer no more than a very general account of how the British forces were maintained. The administration of the Royal Air Force changed very little from the system which we described in Volume V and we add now only a few of the more important changes in organization. We omit naval administration because it had little in common with the administration of the land and air forces and did

* *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V (H.M.S.O. 1973) Chapter XII. Volume VI, Part I, Chapter I Section (ii).

† *Dispatches*. Ed. J. Gurwood: Volume VII, p. 406.

Digitized by Google

not change significantly. Warships were neat units to administer, carrying stores sufficient for long periods and being replenished, generally speaking, from long-standing naval bases.

The administrative systems of the British and American forces were unfortunately irreconcilable because each was rooted in laws and codes of practice in the public administration of both countries. But when two allies were as closely linked as were the British and the Americans in the Mediterranean Theatre, co-ordination of many administrative actions was needed if cross-purposes, duplication and waste were to be avoided. In general, separate but parallel American and British administrative staffs worked the separate national systems. Where closer working was needed and possible, British and American officers were appointed to co-ordinate and were served by combined staffs. One example was the appointment of the British Lieutenant-General Sir Humphrey Gale as the Chief Administrative Officer of Allied Force Headquarters. He was succeeded on 26th January 1944 by another British officer, Lieutenant-General J. G. W. Clark.*[1]

By the spring of 1944 the administrative organization was working efficiently. Limits were imposed by the capacity of ports to handle cargo and the scarcity of some resources, but the Administrative Services were able to provide all that might reasonably be required.†

The administrative task was far-ranging, complex and on a vast scale: nothing less than to provide the large military population scattered over Italy, Sicily and North Africa with everything that was needed to enable it to live and to fight. The ordinary man in uniform, who was neither Wordsworth's Happy Warrior nor a malcontent King's Hard Bargain, was able to echo the 51st's Private Wheeler who wrote from the Peninsular War in 1812, 'I am as well off as my comrades and I am convinced we are all provided for as well as the nature of the service will allow.'‡ The scale of the task is illustrated by three sets of figures. The Theatre ration strength in May 1945 was just under 1,500,000.[2] The strength of the Royal Army Service Corps, which supplied the rations, was

---

* It is interesting to note that, as the war progressed, the custom of balancing a British officer by an American opposite number or deputy, and vice versa, declined in the administrative field.

† When writing about administration we take the word 'military' to cover the three Services: Navy, Army and Air. The word 'service' has two meanings. In one it means the Royal Navy or the Army or the Royal Air Force, but in the administrative sense it means a service, and the staff and units which perform that service. The principal services for the Army were: medical, chaplains, provost, graves, supplies and transport, transportation, ordnance, works, engineer stores, remounts, veterinary, canteen, postal, labour, hirings, salvage, printing and stationery, and welfare. The corps which carried out these functions were the Administrative Services: R.A.S.C., R.A.M.C., R.A.O.C. R.E.M.E. etc.

‡ *The Letters of Private Wheeler 1809–1828*, Ed. B. M. Liddell Hart, (London 1951) p. 74.

Digitized by Google

124,000 all ranks—about the strength of the pre-war British Army outside India and not far short of the British Army's total strength in the late 1970's. And the average *daily* rate of discharge of cargo at the base ports was 21,500 tons of which 8,700 tons was cleared each day by road and 10,200 by rail, the balance being consumed in the ports themselves.[3]

By the spring of 1944 the administrative staffs and the Services enjoyed some advantages which had been bestowed upon them or which they had created for themselves. They knew the operational plans and objectives of the commanders; which forces they would be required to maintain and where; and the resources available. This was in happy contrast to the state of affairs during the weeks before the invasion of Italy. Then administrative commanders and staffs did not know which of five courses the Combined Chiefs of Staff would adopt or which of seven contingency plans Eisenhower would carry out. They did not know what forces they would have to maintain and where, nor even which Italian ports they would be able to use.* In 1944 only one major change of plan occurred. This was in August, when Alexander decided to switch 8th Army's main effort back from the central front to the Adriatic coast for reasons which we will be discussing in Chapter XI.

Further advantages flowed from the foresight of General Sir Brian Robertson who established bases at the ports on both sides of the Italian peninsula whence resources could be switched at will to meet operational requirements; and from the successes of the Allied sailors and airmen who had won naval and air supremacy, endowing the Allied administrative system with virtual immunity from German naval and air attacks.

Difficulties great and small were nevertheless the daily bread of the administrative staffs and the Services. Everything that was indispensable for waging war had to be shipped to Italy from distant and widely separated countries: the United Kingdom, the United States, North Africa, the Middle East, India, Australia, New Zealand. In Mr. John Ehrman's words 'shortage of ships was always a threatening shadow, although it never became a vivid fear'.† The essential imports included some supplies for the Italian military and civilian population, and coal for the railways.[4] The management of sea convoys demanded constant vigilance and skill by many authorities in many countries. When ships reached Italy their cargo had to be discharged, and then cleared from the docks if these were not to become choked. Neither operation was as simple as it sounds.

---

* See *Mediterranean and Middle East* Volume V, p. 395–7.

† John Ehrman: *Grand Strategy* (H.M.S.O. 1956) Volume V, p. 28, 32; Volume VI p. 26–27.

Digitized by Google

The roads of the Italian peninsula very often ran through hilly or mountainous country. Although the best roads were well engineered, their foundations were not strong enough for heavy military traffic and their frequent hairpin bends were too tight for the cumbersome ten-ton trucks of the supply columns, and for tank-transporters and bridging trains. The retreating Germans, too, made matters worse by thorough demolitions deliberately carried out in the most awkward places. Furthermore, there were too few good roads, which caused overcrowding and congestion of the main supply routes. The historians of the R.A.S.C. correctly remark that:

> 'The factors which were common to both road and rail communications were the almost complete destruction of every bridge . . . and vast damage to culverts and tunnels . . . Docks were badly damaged and the general result was to create a never ceasing demand for road transport for the repair of roads, for carrying forward bridging material, and for dock clearance . . .'*

One must never forget the effects of the weather. The sudden Mediterranean rainstorms of summer, and the longer rains of autumn and winter produced mud and flood, these age-old enemies of military operations. Passable but unmetalled diversions around demolitions could become muddy quagmires after a short sharp shower; and transport parked in apparently firm fields could be marooned in a slough of mud just as quickly.

The Administrative Services in Italy suffered constantly from the demands for units from 21st Army Group in north-west Europe, which enjoyed absolute priority.[5] The R.A.S.C. in Italy was a principal sufferer, and was forced to replace lost units by forming new ones recruited from many nationalities and commanded by British cadres. Ceylonese, Palestinian Jews, Cypriots, Arabs, Basutos, Mauritians and Italians were enlisted. The Training Depot of the R.A.S.C. ran no less than forty-two different courses of instruction. In addition about 280,000 Italian civilians were employed by the Administrative Services, and units of the co-belligerent Italian army were used to help in various ways.

Simplicity of control is one of the prerequisites of any administrative system. Although control had been greatly improved by the establishment in Italy of General Sir Brian Robertson's Advanced Administrative Echelon of A.F.H.Q. (FLAMBO) with Alexander's H.Q. A.A.I., the 'Diadem' offensive was fought with the wide 'Mediterranean Gap' complicating the system. With the best will in the world it was not easy to avoid misunderstandings, cross-purposes and duplication of effort between A.F.H.Q. in Algiers and

* Institution of the R.A.S.C.: *The Story of the Royal Army Service Corps 1939–1945* (1955), p. 264–65.

Digitized by Google

H.Q. A.A.I. at Caserta, which was just outside Naples. In July the system was markedly improved by the move of A.F.H.Q. to Italy where it took over the accommodation released at Caserta by H.Q. A.A.I.'s move to Rome.[6] It was then possible to simplify the system and align more closely the operational and administrative responsibilities of the various levels of headquarters in Italy.

The move of A.F.H.Q. to Caserta came only just in time. The Armies' Lines of Communication were growing steadily longer, and the part of Italy which had been 'liberated' and required the support and help of the military administration, was also expanding. For the efficient conduct of the campaign the principal commanders and staff officers agreed that operational commanders must keep in their hands only as much administrative control as they needed for the immediate support of their operations.[7] The greater proportion of the general administration of Italy should pass to the central control of A.F.H.Q. Much thought and consultation with subordinate headquarters produced measures which came into effect on 10th September 1944. We mention only the most important.

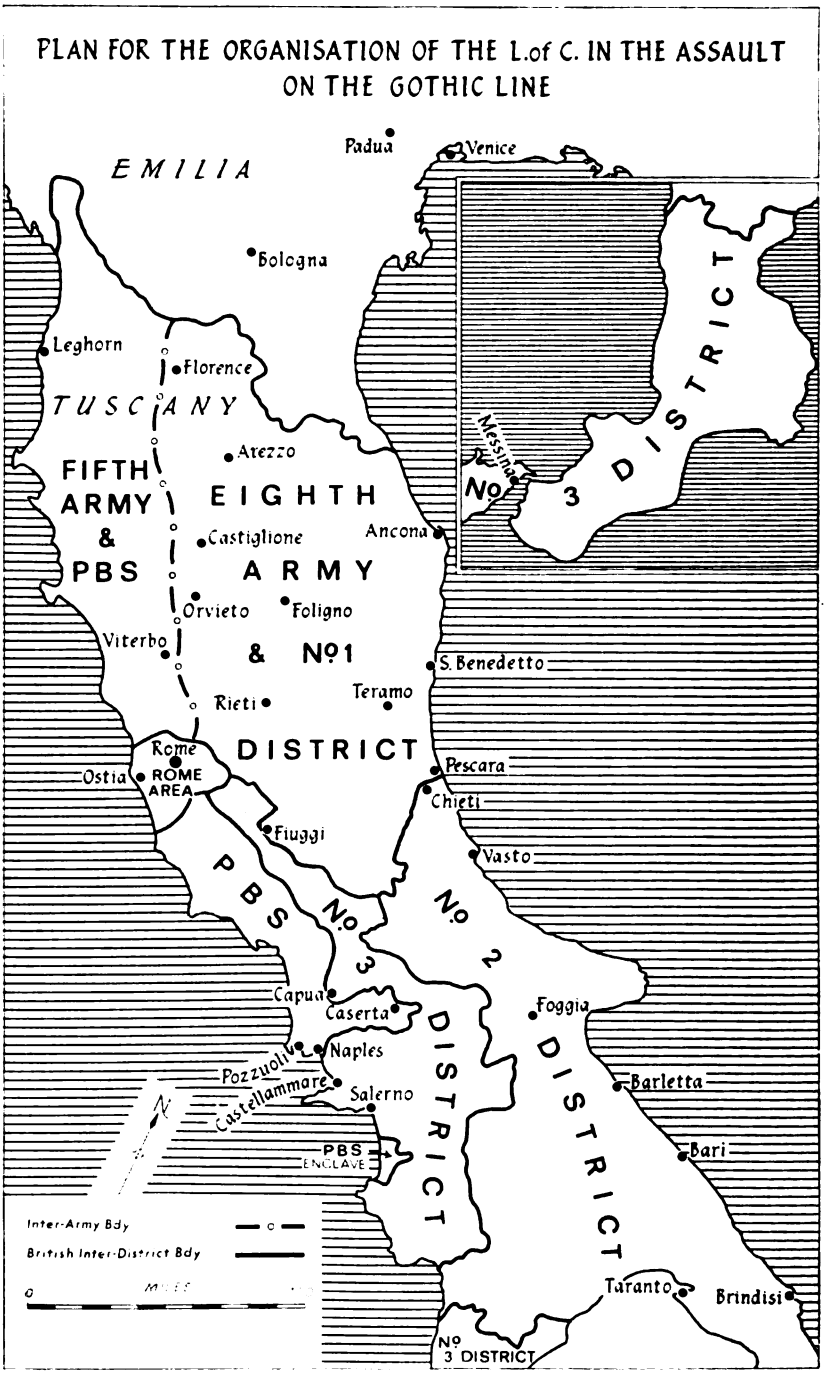
Italy was divided into an Operational Zone and a Lines of Communication Zone, (*see Map 18*). A.F.H.Q. fixed the rear boundary of the former which was moved northwards as the advance progressed. In the Operational Zone A.A.I. kept control of local administration, and as much of the general administration of British and American troops as was agreed to be necessary; that is to say H.Q. A.A.I. controlled some static installations which, strictly speaking, belonged to general administration and hence to A.F.H.Q. In the Lines of Communication Zone A.F.H.Q. controlled both general and local administration.* In technical matters the Directors of Administrative Services at A.F.H.Q. worked hand in glove with Deputy Directors of Administrative Services at A.A.I. In September the rear boundary of the Operational Zone followed the northern boundaries of the provinces of Teramo, Rieti and Viterbo.

The Naval Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean and the Air Commander-in-Chief conformed to the new measures. The Naval Commander-in-Chief kept general administration in his own hands, co-operating with A.F.H.Q., but where ports lay in the Operational Zone he co-operated with H.Q. A.A.I. through his Flag Officers in various areas as these came into being: Gibraltar and Western Approaches, Italy and Liaison, Levant and Eastern Mediterranean; Northern Area Mediterranean, Taranto and Liaison, Western

* The terms 'local' and 'general' administration need explanation. The distinction between the two is often blurred but broadly speaking 'local' covers the day to day needs of units which are controlled by their own administrative staffs, whereas 'general' signifies the overall control of the administrative system such as the lay out of the major supply depots, the decisions on priorities between formations and between the Army and the civilian population, and the wider aspects of administrative policy.

Digitized by Google

Map 18



Digitized by Google

Mediterranean. The Air Commander-in-Chief co-operated with A.F.H.Q. in the general administration of his forces, but delegated co-operation with H.Q. A.A.I. to suitable subordinate Air Headquarters.

The next important changes in administrative control were made in December 1944 and January 1945, and will be discussed in a later chapter.

(ii)

The Lines of Communication of a land or an air force are designed to forward everything needed from bases to the most advanced troops and airfields, and to bring back human and equipment casualties to General Hospitals and Base Workshops. In Italy this business was carried out by sea, rail, road and, to some extent, air. The Lines of Communication Zone included all types of administrative installations and units, to name some at random: petrol depots, ammunition depots, workshops, field bakeries, casualty clearing stations, General Hospitals, mobile bath units, and so on through a very long and varied list. This is not surprising because, to quote an able writer on military affairs, Cyril Falls:

> 'Apart from the operative side of warfare, staff work has . . . become more and more like a vast business organization concerned, as no single business organization is, with maintaining the existence and supplying all the needs of a military community . . .'*

Although in British practice every commander is responsible for the administration of his formation or unit and has an administrative staff, it was found necessary to set up separate and static commanders and staffs to control the Lines of Communication Zone. In Italy the Army's was the most elaborate organization and we will use it as an example.

In 1944 administrative control was exercised by the highest commander through his administrative staff and Directors of Administrative Services. Control then passed downwards through the larger operational headquarters and then through a chain of lesser administrative headquarters, each of which had a commander and an administrative staff scaled to the amount and variety of the work to be done. In Italy in 1944 the administrative headquarters in descending order of importance and size were:

---

* Introduction p.x to Walter Görlitz: *The German General Staff* (London, 1953).

Digitized by Google

A.F.H.Q. (Administrative Staff)
Headquarters A.A.I. (Administrative Staff)
Headquarters 8th Army (Administrative Staff)
Headquarters of:
Districts
Areas
Sub-Areas
Garrisons

The Administrative Staff of A.F.H.Q., A.A.I. and 8th Army were concerned with the administrative policy and measures of general administration. The commanders and staffs of Districts and of lower administrative headquarters each had charge of a part of the Lines of Communication Zone. Each was responsible for seeing that measures of general administration, which had been delegated by higher headquarters, were carried out, and for taking any local action necessary to ensure that their part of the Lines of Communication Zone was working efficiently.

Table I, much simplified, and *Map 18* show the lay out of British administrative headquarters in Italy on 1st August 1944, and the place where each headquarters was situated.[8]

The commanders of the Districts who, unless otherwise stated, held their posts until the end of hostilities were as follows: No. 1 District Major-General C. A. Heydeman; No. 2 District Major-General E. R. Nares; No. 3 District Major-General A. L. Collier until 7th August 1944, then Major-General G. Lammie until 5th March 1945, then Major-General N. Clewes.[9]

The city of Rome was only important for administrative purposes as a junction of roads and railways, and as a site for hospitals, transit camps, and leave hotels.[10] Six railheads of various types were situated there. On the other hand it was an administrative burden because its population of two million had to be fed and provided with the necessities of life.* Order had to be maintained, and famous buildings and art treasures had to be protected[12] from looters among the population and the Allied troops. Politically the city was much more important.[13] It was a natural seat for the nascent Italian Government, for the headquarters of the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories in Italy, for the Allied Control Commission and for diplomatic posts.† There was no way of avoiding

---

* This was a temporary expedient. In principle the Italian Government was responsible for feeding the civilian population under the supervision of the Allied Control Commission.[11] As an example of the Army's help, A.F.H.Q. in November 1944 moved 900 tons of wheat daily from Ancona and Perugia for the civilian population in Rome.

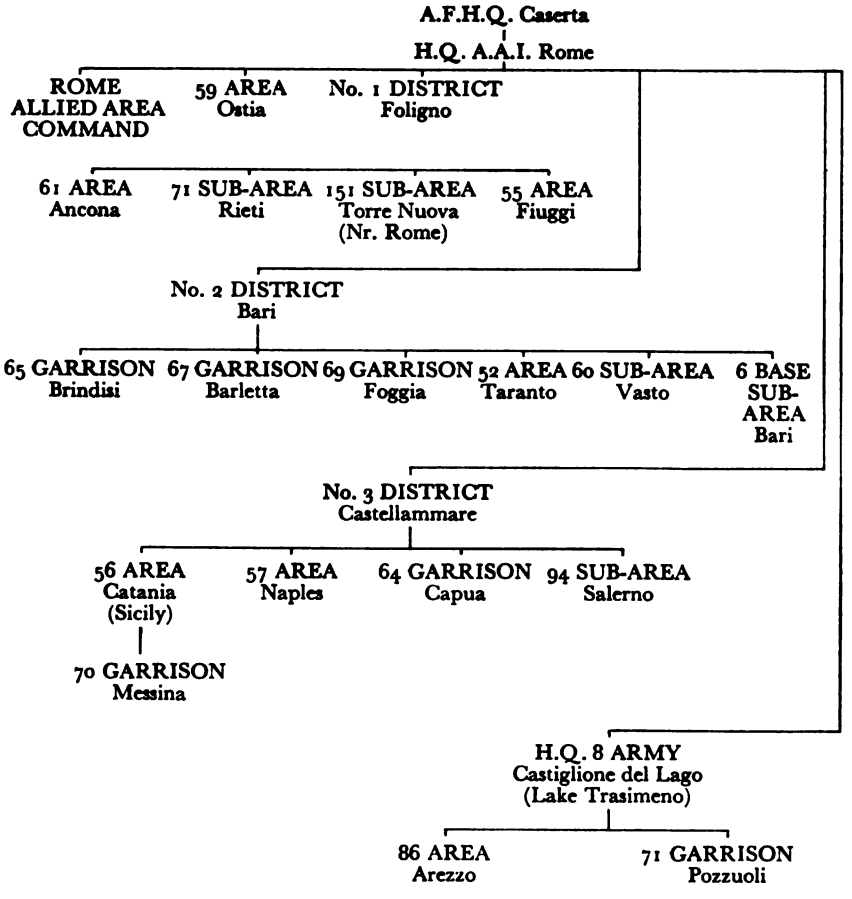
† Winston S. Churchill: *The Second World War* Volume V (1952), p. 441. *Report by the Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean to the Combined Chiefs of Staff* (H.M.S.O. 1948) Part II, p. 19.

Digitized by Google

TABLE I

ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS

1st AUGUST 1944



its use and so its administrative advantages were used to the full: labour, covered accommodation, storage, road access, railway facilities and so forth.

5th Army took control of Rome from 4th to 15th June when it handed over to A.A.I. On 1st July the Rome Allied Area Command was established under command of Major-General H. Johnson, United States Army, with the British Brigadier A. Low as Deputy Commander. American troops formed the garrison, with representa-

Digitized by Google

tive British and French detachments for a time. Rome Area (the short title) was directly subordinate to H.Q. A.A.I. For some time 59 Area administered British troops in Rome Area, and was subordinate to H.Q. No. 3 District. The Rome Area remained in being until the end of the Italian campaign.

(iii)

We must now look at some examples of the working of the Lines of Communication which we defined in general terms in the previous section. The main characteristic of Lines of Communication is continual movement: forward of troops, weapons, supplies and stores of every description from base areas to the fighting front; and backward, of men, especially the wounded and the sick, of vehicles, weapons, and equipment for repairs. In consequence a very important part is played by representatives of the Transportation and Movements Directorates of the Quarter-Master-General's Staff. There are two functions of control which are required if the best results are to be gained from the various systems of transportation and agencies of movement. One is performed by the Transportation staff and the other by the Movements staff. They have been well described by Major J. B. Higham and Mr. E. A. Knighton, authors of a War Office monograph on the subject:

> 'The first is the technical control by the "Operator" [Transportation], who has to ensure that his system, be it shipping, rail, road, or air, is operated so that the maximum output is physically obtainable; the second is the control by the "User" [Movements], who has to ensure that the physical resources which are put at his disposal by the various operators are integrated and used to carry what is vitally needed in accordance with the operational requirements of the various countries, theatres and armies involved'.*

In North Africa, Sicily and Italy about 23,000 R.E. (Transportation) troops were deployed to support operations, and Movement Control Allied Forces reached a strength of 350 officers and 1,900 men.† The main tasks of Transportation in Italy were to repair and operate railways and operate ports, the latter in co-operation with the Royal Navy. Its interests lay always in the re-opening of ports and rail routes, and their subsequent increase to maximum capacity. The Movement Control staffs had to balance the

---

* Major J. B. Higham R.E. and E.A. Knighton: *Movements* (War Office 1955 for official use), p. 3.

† Brigadier R. Micklem: *Transportation* (War Office 1950), p. viii; and Chapter VII; Higham and Knighton *op. cit.* p. 351, 356.

Digitized by Google

competing requirements of the two Armies, the Allied Air Forces and the civilian population.

The solid logistic base of the campaign in Italy was the naval power of the Allies which enabled them to carry men and materials across the sea. Since wartime Italy produced little that the Allied forces required except vegetables, fruit and wine, the Allies depended upon the regular sea convoys, which we have described in Chapters I and VII. The loading of these convoys, their sailings, and destinations required the collaboration of many authorities. The highest co-ordinating authority in the Mediterranean Theatre was the Mediterranean Shipping Board, formerly the North African Shipping Board.[14] The Chairman of the Board was Mr. Gibson Graham of the British Ministry of War Transport, who had an American Deputy Chairman. The Board was composed of representatives of eleven authorities.* Its general function was to co-ordinate Allied shipping in the Mediterranean, to provide the various authorities in London and Washington with Mediterranean shipping requirements, and to receive information on shipping made available by them. The Board had a number of executive functions in the Mediterranean Theatre such as the nomination of ships to tasks, the allocation of priorities, the determination of the composition of convoys in the Theatre for the Naval C.-in-C., and the ensurance of the fastest possible turn-round of ships.

The tonnage of cargo 'lifts' available in vessels and craft was one side of the coin of sea-supply to Italy; and the capacity of ports in Italy to accept cargo was the other. On the west coast of Italy there were the well-established Naples ports, and, to their north, Civitavecchia, Piombino, and Leghorn (*see Map 12*). On the east coast of Italy there were the equally well-established 'Heel' ports: Taranto, Gallipoli, Brindisi, Monopoli, Bari, Barletta. The only other important port on the east coast was Ancona. Civitavecchia, Piombino, and Leghorn served the American forces, and handled up to 1,200 tons of cargo daily for British forces. The ports on the east coast served the British forces, and also to some extent the Yugoslav forces on the other side of the Adriatic, and later British forces in Greece.

In the spring and summer of 1944 all the ports north of Rome were badly damaged by the Allied air forces and by German demolitions.[15] At Piombino the quays were destroyed, and for a time DUKWs of the Royal Army Service Corps helped to discharge

---

* Naval C.-in-C. Mediterranean; Principal Sea Transport Officer Mediterranean; Naval Control and Service Officer Mediterranean; United States Navy; G–4 A.F.H.Q.; Transportation A.F.H.Q.; Petroleum Section A.F.H.Q.; Director of Harbour Craft; Ministry of War Transport; U.S. Shipping Administration.

Digitized by Google

ships.* When Ancona was captured on 18th July the Polish Corps found that all the ships in the harbour had been sunk, and two moles and the quays had been almost totally destroyed.[16] The whole area of the docks was pitted with bomb craters and littered with piles of rubble. By this time however the Navy and the specialist troops of the Army had developed ways of clearing ports quickly. The Royal Engineers and the South African Engineer Corps railway units were on the spot within three days and the Port Repair Ship *Progress* appeared on 23rd July, as did the first cargo ships of a convoy. Between 23rd and 31st July 16,475 tons of cargo had been landed, a daily average of 1,831 tons. This was a remarkable achievement, because it was only about 670 tons per day short of the expected capacity of Ancona.

The capacity of the ports to receive cargo was studied by the Administrative Staffs from day to day so that the movement of ships could be regulated and turned round quickly.[17] The ships included ocean-going vessels of various types, coasters, and even the R.A.S.C.'s own schooners on charter.† In the early months of 1944 some convoys still sailed from 'producer countries' to ports in North Africa, their cargo being transhipped to coasters and other vessels for carriage to ports in Italy. As the capacity of the Italian ports improved it became possible to sail nearly all ships 'through' and loaded for particular ports.[18] This saved the time of double-handling cargo, quickened turn-round, and was more economical in ships. All this needed careful staff work and the issue of mountains of paper. It can indeed be said that typewriters, duplicators, paper and ink were essential weapons of war.

The capacity of the ports to receive cargo exceeded expectations. Naples, its satellites, and the 'Heel' ports, when fully developed, could handle the total requirement of A.A.I. The land L. of C. was, however, shortened by using ports further north. Civitavecchia, at the beginning of July, took 3,260 tons and Piombino 4,450 tons per day.[19] Ancona was organized to take a daily import of 2,500 tons to begin with and this was raised to 4,500 tons per day later. The types of cargo and the quantities demanded were not standard. They varied from period to period according to the needs of users and the shipping space available. After 8th Army changed its plan from a thrust through the centre of the Northern Apennines to a thrust along the Adriatic coast, the quantity of cargo consigned

---

* The DUKW was an amphibian which carried a load of 3½ tons, or 25 troops. See *Mediterranean and Middle East* Volume V, p. 147 for more details. R.A.S.C. DUKW units were No. 239 and 385 General Transport Companies (DUKW).

† No. 247 Company (Motor Boat) R.A.S.C.; Nos. 797, 798, 801 Companies (Water Transport) R.A.S.C. About 200,000 tons of cargo were carried in 1944. The R.A.S.C. 'Fleet' had about 131 vessels.

Digitized by Google

to the ports of the east coast increased with a corresponding decrease to the west coast ports. The plan was changed on 4th August 1944 but the necessary changes in the destination of cargo could not become effective for some time. There is much truth in the Army's old saying that 'When G walks a mile, Q must run three'. Table II below sets out the quantities of cargoes landed in one monthly period of account. The period, chosen at random for this example, is from 30th July to 28th August 1944.

TABLE II

Figures are in tons*

Type of Cargo	West Coast Ports	East Coast Ports	Total West and East Coast
Engineers' stores	29,400	17,400	46,800
Survey stores	300	150	450
Supplies	28,200	21,900	50,100
Medical	600	300	900
Ordnance stores	19,950	4,950	24,900
Cased vehicles	8,700	8,400	17,100
Ammunition	27,900	18,840	46,740
Printing stores	300	300	600
Canteen stores	5,850	3,450	9,300
British and U.S. air forces	29,000	79,100	108,100
Civilian supplies	31,000	18,500	49,500
Petrol, Oil, Lubricants	13,800	13,200	27,000
Coal	45,300	39,700	85,000
Forage	2,100	—	2,100
Transportation stores	9,800	7,100	16,900
For Italian Army	3,300	4,200	7,500
Special Operations Med. Theatre	—	6,000	6,000
Miscellaneous	—	450	450

A.F.H.Q. and the Commanding General North African Theatre of Operations, United States Army, were responsible for placing requests for types and quantities of cargo with the authorities in the United Kingdom and the United States. On 10th June 1944 A.F.H.Q. issued an Administrative Memorandum (No. 25) which replaced its predecessor of January 1944. The new memorandum laid down the procedure for submitting requirements for Long-term and Short-term Maintenance.[20] The Instruction covered, in general terms, all commodities except petrol, oil and lubricants (POL), coal, and forage, for which separate provision was made. For the

* Compiled from WO 170/7 (A.F.H.Q., Q Maintenance War Diary) July–August 1944.

Digitized by Google

Royal Air Force, the instruction provided only for commodities used in common with the Army. The purpose of Administrative Instruction No. 25 was to make sure that the amount of cargo shipped from the 'producer' countries could be accepted by the ports in Italy; and that the kinds of cargo shipped were what was needed to support operations. Long-term Maintenance requirements could only be forecast in general terms and were to be submitted by H.Q. A.A.I. at Caserta to A.F.H.Q. in Algiers 105 days ahead, giving:

i. An estimate of how much cargo each Italian port could accept. The quantity was to include cased vehicles and to exclude assembled vehicles and bulk petroleum.
ii. The allotment to each Italian port of the kinds of cargo, other than coal and forage, required for the British Army, American ground forces, British and American Air Forces, Special Operations Mediterranean, Italian Army and Italian civil population.
iii. The provisional allotment to each Italian port of packed petroleum, coal and forage.
iv. The data upon which demands were calculated in terms of divisions, air squadrons and total numbers of troops.

A.F.H.Q. examined A.A.I.'s demands and sent an approved list to the authorities in the 'producer' countries, and also to H.Q. A.A.I. The authorities in the 'producer' countries arranged the convoys and the loading of ships in them to agree with A.F.H.Q.'s list. Short-term Maintenance requirements were supplied from stocks already in Base depots in the Mediterranean. A.A.I.'s demands had to be given in greater detail and accuracy, and so each month was divided into three ten-day periods. Thirty days before each ten-day period H.Q. A.A.I. informed A.F.H.Q. of its requirements for that period in an order of priority. Twenty-five days before the ten-day period began A.F.H.Q. informed H.Q. A.A.I. of the arrangements which it was making to meet the demands from Base depots, thus leaving enough time to make any alterations which might prove to be necessary.

We have given a very much simplified and shortened account of procedures which called for careful and co-ordinated work by various sections of the staff at several levels of headquarters and—a factor which is not often mentioned—for good signal communications.[21] Mistakes were bound to occur, and were at their most damaging in convoys which were sailing direct to ports in Italy. It was not possible to assemble ships whose carrying capacity exactly matched the quantity of cargo to be lifted. The shippers in 'producer' countries might find that they had cargo-space to spare in a convoy and they would fill it rather than let ships sail

Digitized by Google

partly empty. The result might be that more cargo was shipped than the port of destination could accept. If this mistake was discovered in time, the surplus cargo could be dumped in a North African port and sent on in a 'local' convoy when a port in Italy could accept it. But if the convoy arrived in Italy with an undiscovered surplus that surplus usually had to be sent back to North Africa. Another mistake was to load a ship with a single commodity which was to be distributed among a number of Italian ports. In this event a ship might have to visit several ports, discharging part of its load at each, or might have to tranship its load to 'local' convoys. The results of incorrect loading were accumulation of cargo in wrong places, waste of time, and delay in turning round ships.

A further problem which always faced the staff at ports was how to lay hands on enough transport to remove cargo quickly enough from the quays to Base depots. A quay stacked with cargo was a quay out of use. On a day picked at random, 26th August, we find that 5,320 tons of cargo were landed at Bari and the transport 'lift' to remove it was only 2,476 tons; at Brindisi 1,315 tons landed with a transport 'lift' of 1,082 tons; at the west coast ports 4,009 tons of 'British' cargo with a transport 'lift' of 3,110 tons.*

Nevertheless the system did work. Here and there a barely legible signature on a dusty document brings to mind the many who laboured so hard 'behind the lines' at tedious tasks essential to the system's efficiency. The stevedores of a Docks Operating Company and the members of many other administrative units and staffs toiled anonymously to ensure that the Allied Armies in Italy lacked for nothing. It is a pleasant obligation of a historian to give these forgotten servants of war the praise which they deserve.

(iv)

See Map 19

Once landed in Italy, supplies, stores, equipment and vehicles had to be sent forward to advanced depots of various types and to the troops. The quantities were large; to take artillery ammunition as an example, about 322,600 tons were sent forward between January and July 1944.[22] Rail and road were the means of transport on land, and we shall look at them in that order.

The technical railway organization was the Military Railway Service, jointly formed by the British and the Americans. The

* On the west coast 'British' was the word used to distinguish cargo for British forces from cargo for American forces.

Digitized by Google

Map 19

Digitized by Google

Chief Administrative Officer at A.F.H.Q. delegated railway business to an American Chief of Transportation and a British Deputy. Next below came the Director-General, Military Railways and a Director of Transportation. Staff sections dealt with such matters as Stores, Railway Operating Equipment, and Engineering, and the chain continued down to railway engineer troops at work on the tracks.[23] This elaborate but logical organization ensured that the railways played their part in the plans of operations set out by the General Staff.

The British and Commonwealth railway units in Italy in 1944 were:[24]

British

Two Headquarters Railway Construction and Maintenance Groups.
Five Railway Construction Companies.
One Mechanical Equipment Company.
One Railway Survey Company.
Two Railway Bridging Sections.
Two Railway Telegraph Companies, Royal Corps of Signals.

South African Engineer Corps

One Headquarters Railway Construction Group.
Three Railway Construction Companies.
One Headquarters Tunnelling Group, from March 1944.
Two Tunnelling Companies, from March 1944.
One Signal Company, from September 1944.

Indian Engineers

From September 1944:
One Headquarters Railway Construction and Maintenance Group.
One Railway Construction Company.
One Railway Maintenance Company.*

Unfortunately the development of the rail L. of C. which served the British forces during their advance from Rome to Florence tends to be a dull catalogue of the names, places and dates. We should note the remarkable speed of the reconstruction of essential lines. Before the beginning of Alexander's Spring offensive the planners had estimated that the reconstruction of the lines from the area Mignano to Rome would take 94 days.[25] The plan for the maintenance of the armies during the advance to the Gothic Line was for 5th Army to be served by the west coast line Rome–Civitavecchia–Leghorn, while the greater part of 8th Army was served by the line Rome–Orte–Florence and then Orte–Falconara.[26]

* Two more units of Indian Engineers came to Italy before the end of the campaign :
One Railway Construction Company in February 1945.
One Railway Maintenance Company in May 1945.

Digitized by Google

The Polish Corps would depend upon rail to Ortona and then sea to Ancona. On 14th July a further revised list was issued. This gave three priority groups, 1st, 2nd and 3rd, with the lines numbered consecutively from first to last.

1st Priority

(i) Orte–Foligno–Assisi
(ii) Orte–Chiusi–Arezzo
(iii) Civitavecchia–Leghorn
(iv) Ancona–Bologna
(v) Leghorn–Bologna by the easiest route

2nd Priority

(vi) Foligno–Falconara
(vii) Ortona–Ancona

3rd Priority

(viii) Campoleone–Rome

In this new list the line Orte–Assisi had moved from fourth to first place; Orte–Chiusi–Arezzo from third to second place; and Civitavecchia–Leghorn from fifth to third place: Foligno–Falconara had remained at the head of 2nd Priority lines but the Transportation Staff and 8th Army's Administrative Staff wisely decided to ignore its low place and to push ahead with its reconstruction. They reasoned that without this link the port of Ancona would not be served by a railway to back up supply by sea which could easily be interrupted by bad weather or shortage of ships and craft.[27] The only other serviceable railway line between the west and east coasts of Italy was Naples–Foggia, which was far too far to the south.

Rail and road played complementary parts in maintaining the forces. The rail was the most economic load-carrier because a goods train of modest size could lift 2,500 tons whereas a General Transport Company equipped with 3-ton lorries could lift (in theory) a mere 300 tons, or, if equipped with 10-ton lorries, 750 tons (also in theory). However, reconstructing a railway line was usually a slower job than repairing a road. Rail transport, too, was not as flexible because trains could run only from starting point to railheads. Motor transport was needed to lift goods from Base depots (unless these were rail-served) to the railway's starting point, and to distribute goods from the railheads. In contrast motor transport could run wherever roads existed or were made. The rail was cheaper in men because a train could be handled by a driver, a fireman, and a guard whereas each lorry required a driver, and often two. This comparison is of course an over-simplification because it leaves out all the men, apart from the crews of trains, who were needed to run the railway. On balance 'rail' was more economic but 'road' more flexible and hence convenient.

Digitized by Google

The progress of the Italian railways' reconstruction is best shown by the railheads which were opened.[28] It took about a week to stock a railhead with its full range of commodities. 8th Army's railheads on 1st May were in the Mignano area. The two British Railway Construction and Maintenance Groups were given the task of reconstructing the line from Mignano to Rome, and on 17th June railheads opened at Roccasecca and Aquino. The work went steadily forward and on 5th July the first train from Naples entered Rome. Meanwhile American engineers were at work on the west coast railway, but repairing its tunnels proved to be a more difficult job and this line was not re-opened until 25th July. However from 5th July the Naples–Mignano–Rome and Anzio–Rome lines were bringing 6,300 tons daily into Rome. In the end six railheads of different kinds were opened in and near Rome. A.F.H.Q. and the Flag Officer Western Italy stopped large ships using Anzio after 3rd July, although some landing craft and schooners were discharged there from time to time. This reduced the usefulness of the Anzio–Rome line which had been opened on 29th June.

Figures of tonnage have little meaning in themselves, without a yardstick of requirements. The rule of thumb in Italy in 1944 was that a British division, armoured or infantry, needed an average of 620 tons per day of stores and supplies of all kinds, whereas an American or French division needed 730 tons.[29] In addition part of the tonnage which railways and railheads handled had to be set aside to create reserves.

As soon as the Germans withdrew from Rome the South African Engineer Corps' railway troops began to restore the main line running northwards towards Orte.[30] The first fruits of their work were railheads at Civita Castellana and the neighbouring Gallese Teverina, about 120 miles north of Rome. These opened on 7th July and were planned to handle between them 4,000 tons per day. This target was not reached. Civita Castellana handled 2,500 tons per day and Gallese Teverina 1,000 tons, a shortfall of 500 tons per day. The next railheads opened at Terni and Assisi on 24th July. Assisi was some 70 miles north of Civita Castellana and Terni about 28 miles. These advances of railheads, although apparently small, were worth having as they eased the shortages of road transport which we will be discussing next. Assisi was planned to handle 2,500 tons and Terni 1,000 tons per day and they did so.

The next important place for administrative purposes was Arezzo because it was well served by rail and road and was on 8th Army's main axis of advance. Robertson decided to establish a railhead and an Army roadhead (No. 4) at Arezzo and to make it the centre of administrative support for the Army Group attack

Digitized by Google

on the Gothic Line. It was not his intention to build up Arezzo as an Advanced Base. Three tactical developments delayed the opening of Arezzo.[31] The battle of the Trasimene Line, from 20th to 30th June, lasted longer than had been expected; Ancona was not captured until 18th July instead of at the end of June, as had been hoped; and the battle for Arezzo itself, 4th to 16th July, also took longer than had been anticipated. These delays slowed the work of restoring the railways, and prevented the opening of the railhead at Arezzo until 10th August. When the railway lines from Rome to Orte, from Orte to Chiusi, and from Chiusi towards Florence had been restored they were able to carry some 2,500 tons per day. Arezzo railhead started with 2,000 tons per day. This was increased to 2,500 tons by 15th August.

Notwithstanding Robertson's decision to make Arezzo the administrative centre for the attack on the Gothic Line, he did not change his intention of creating an Advanced Base at Ancona.*[32] When Arezzo had been taken, South African railway troops set to work to restore the railway line to Falconara, which is just north of Ancona.[33] The line opened for traffic on 7th September (some authorities say 3rd September), and railheads were opened at Iesi and Chiaravalle and later at Senigallia. It would have been useful to open the east coast railway line from Ortona to Ancona, but there were not enough railway troops in Italy to undertake this task in addition to the work that they were doing west of the Apennines.[34] One reason for this shortage of railway troops was a late decision to restore the line from Pisa to Florence because the many high viaducts and tunnels on the line from Arezzo to Florence were found so badly damaged that reconstruction would have taken far too long.[35]

Highly satisfactory though the reconstruction of the Italian railways proved to be, they could not carry the total load required to sustain A.A.I.'s operations. Based on the rule of thumb of 620 tons per division per day, 8th Army advancing to the Gothic Line with two corps of six divisions needed a theoretical tonnage of 3,720 tons per day of which only 2,500 tons were being delivered by rail. Added to this there was the need to stockpile reserves for the assault on the Gothic Line. Sir Brian Robertson estimated that each Army would need a total of 4,000 tons per day and the Air Forces a further 1,500 tons per day during the build up of stocks for the Gothic Line offensive.[36] The shortfall would have to be made up, in the case of 8th Army, by road transport. 5th Army could, of course, use shipping as far as Leghorn.

---

* Ancona was to hold 15 days' stocks, and 15 days' working margin for a force of seven divisions.

Digitized by Google

(v)

During the advance from Rome to Florence, Robertson had hoped to maintain the Armies and the associated Air Forces as much as possible by sea convoys and by rail. There were no plans for a regular service of road transport between the main base areas and the front, as there had been during the campaign in Africa.[37] In the event sea convoys and the railways proved unable to meet all the demands made upon them although, as we have seen, ports and chosen railway lines were restored to working order quicker than expected. We have mentioned the advance of the railheads in section (iv). The dates of the capture of suitable ports were:[38]

West Coast	*East Coast*
Civitavecchia, 6th June	Ancona, 18th July
Piombino, 25th June	
Leghorn, 19th July.	

No one was surprised when it proved necessary to use large amounts of road transport to supplement sea and rail, although it was not easy to find transport to meet all demands. The transport of an army has many tasks besides lifting supplies, stores, and ammunition. In 8th Army, during the period which we are now considering, as much as ten per cent of the load-carrying transport was permanently employed by the Royal Engineers on road repair.[39] The infantry division had no organic troop-carrying transport of its own and depended upon R.A.S.C. units to lift its infantry. Medical units, like casualty clearing stations, were also dependent on R.A.S.C. help to move their large tonnages of tentage, bedding and medical equipment.*

In the Mediterranean Theatre in 1944 the Royal Army Service Corps held and used most of the Army's bulk load-carrying transport.[40] The maid of all work of the R.A.S.C. was the General Transport Company, equipped with 3-ton or 10-ton lorries. The 3-ton lorry was a reliable vehicle, handicapped by a two-wheel drive which weakened its performance in mud or on other bad surfaces. The 10-ton lorry, which had been so useful in Africa because it carried a larger load, was under-powered for the steep gradients of Italian hill roads. Its slowness on hills delayed other traffic so much that it could rarely be fully loaded. The vehicle's size made it unhandy to manoeuvre at diversions round demolitions and other awkward places like the narrow streets of Italian towns and villages. It was found that a G.T.C. could cover about 120 miles a day on good roads, and 80 miles a day on fair roads, taking

* The interested reader should see F.A.E. Crewe F.R.S.: *The Army Medical Services, Campaigns*, Volume III, (H.M.S.O. 1958) Chapter 4.

Digitized by Google

into account such factors as stops for minimum rest for drivers and maintenance of vehicles, for loading and unloading, economic speed, road space and the weather.[41] The net payload which could be delivered at destination depended upon length of turn-round expressed in days. If a company with a total lift of 300 tons worked a three day turn-round of any number of miles, the accumulation of goods at destination would be at the rate of 100 tons per day.

The motor transport of the Army was classified as First Line (organic to units), Second Line (organic to divisions and brigades) and Third Line which was controlled and allotted on a Theatre basis.[42] Third Line transport was controlled by the Director of Supplies and Transport at A.F.H.Q., a Major-General who was served by a Transport Staff section of ten staff officers. The transport allotted by him was sub-allotted by the senior Supplies and Transport Staff Officers at Army, Corps, and District headquarters. The amount of transport which was allotted to 8th Army depended upon the number of divisions to be maintained, the distance between Army railheads and roadheads, the number of roads that could be used and their condition, the requirements for engineering work, and the quantities of reserve stocks to be held in roadheads. At the beginning of the Spring offensive 8th Army was given 47 General Transport Companies, and 50 during the advance from Rome to Arezzo and Florence.[43]

As early as March 1944 8th Army had treated all Third Line transport as a pool from which to make allotments to suit operational needs.[44] It went further by ordering all formations to be ready to place their Second Line transport at the disposal of 8th Army when required to do so and to carry on their own general maintenance with their First Line transport. During the advance to the Arno 13th Corps and 10th Corps at one time or another centralized all their transport including units' non-fighting vehicles.[45] Improvisation was pushed to extremes at times to overcome transport shortages. The weather and the roads were often so bad that Divisional R.A.S.C. Companies had to use Bren-gun carriers on short but difficult stretches of country, and 6th Armoured Division's R.A.S.C. used White scout cars, with their excellent four-wheel drive, to carry troops and supplies.

We must mention some other types of transport used by the R.A.S.C. A most important unit was the Jeep-and-trailer platoon. At first these had been improvised to meet special and temporary needs but by 1944 it had become possible to form properly established platoons and to allot them more or less permanently to divisions. Their task was to deliver to troops in the most advanced and exposed positions anything that was needed—supplies, ammunition,

Digitized by Google

weapons, and so on.[46] The officers and men were volunteers who were deterred by nothing in performing their exceedingly arduous duties. They drove mainly at night on anything that resembled a road or a track and in any weather. They took shelling and mortaring as a matter of course, and on occasions had brushes with German patrols. If they struck obstacles so bad that their loaded vehicles could not drive through, even in lowest gear and with chains on all four wheels, they would unload their cargo, carry it across the bad patches, and then re-load. They slept and ate their irregular meals under any cover they could find, even the meanest shed, or in the open air if they found none. They were in a class by themselves.

A most adaptable vehicle was the 40-ton tank transporter because it not only saved wear and tear of tanks' tracks and engines and reduced the damage to roads caused by tank tracks, but they could also be usefully misused helping to clear docks and to move large quantities of supplies up the Lines of Communication. 8th Army held at best about 250 tank transporters, organized in companies, and during June 1944 they made about 1,440 tank deliveries.[47] They were, however, very large and slow, and had to be moved in special convoys at set times when roads were cleared of other vehicles for the purpose.[48] Their drivers showed great initiative and skill in tackling such obstacles as sharp bends, greasy surfaces, difficult bridges, and mud, when a moment's inattention or a false move could cause chaos in a column because, besides other drawbacks, it was almost impossible to reverse the huge vehicles on the narrow Italian roads. At weak bridges it was often necessary to off-load tanks, and to on-load them when they had crossed under their own power. There were five places where off-loading was necessary between Civita Castellana and Orvieto, and four between Foligno and Iesi on the road which crossed the Fossato Pass. A skilled crew could off-load and on-load a tank in seven minutes, but even so the resultant delays were cumulative. Tank Transporter Companies took time-keeping in earnest, and some practised a 'meals on wheels' method of saving time. Cooks went ahead to a convenient roadside place, cooked and packed the meal, and as each tank transporter lumbered up, the second driver jumped off, picked up the food and jumped on again. The meal was eaten on the move. This was an uncomfortable practice, and could not be used too often because it denied the crews the rest and the support of a proper meal which a halt would have provided. Cumulative exhaustion of the crews could occur if 'meals on wheels' was overdone.

Tipper trucks of various types were unromantic vehicles for which there was continual demand.[49] They were organized by the

Digitized by Google

R.A.S.C. in Tipper Companies but usually worked in detachments of platoons or sections with Field Companies R.E. 8th Army had three and a half Companies at the beginning of the campaign in Italy, and six Companies at its close, besides a few independent platoons. These numbers were insufficient for the amount of work to be done and seriously handicapped the engineers who depended upon them. The Tipper Companies' main task was to carry forward metal and ballast for rebuilding roads and tracks, for making approach roads to bridges, and for constructing or repairing airfields. When not employed on these tasks, tippers would carry anything anywhere. Some of the tippers were equipped with winches, and anyone who fought in Italy will thankfully remember being hauled out of some river bed, or up a steep gradient deep in mud by a winch equipped tipper. An officer of one Company, Lieutenant A. R. Boorer, described the life of the tippers very faithfully when he wrote:

> 'All through the Italian campaign the tippers have been right up with the infantry, building and maintaining roads and airports. One of the last big jobs in Italy done by the tippers was the building of the approach roads to the Senio river. The tippers were not many yards behind our FDLS and were frequently subjected to quite a considerable amount of mortar fire which made the task extremely difficult. It was really a sticky job for all concerned, but the roads were built, the assault went in, over the roads came the R.A.S.C. Bailey Bridge Carrying Coys, who with the R.E. crossed the gap that held us up so long, and then came the heavy armour and the remainder of the Army on its way to victory . . . '[50]

This is an interesting passage because it shows how troops engaged in hard and monotonous tasks who could show no device like that of the 17th/21st Lancers—the Death's Head badge with the motto 'Or Glory'—could feel themselves to be part of those who are called, with an implication of superiority, 'the fighting troops'. Without the constant support of the Administrative Services the 'fighting troops' could not fight.

Apart from the specialist units like the Tipper Companies, the majority of the R.A.S.C. transport units were involved in stocking and delivering stocks from roadheads and maintenance areas at various levels. The roadhead was very much like a railhead and held mixed stocks of supplies, ammunition, petrol, and other commodities. It occupied more space on the ground than a railhead because it was laid out to take advantage of roads and tracks whereas a railhead was tethered closely to a railway line. A roadhead could be established more quickly than a railhead because the latter could not be stocked until the railway line had been restored

Digitized by Google

as far as the railhead's site. While railheads were being pushed forward in June and July 1944, the front was moving steadily northwards at an average pace during 8th Army's advance to the Arno of five miles a day. Army roadheads were formed to fill the gap between existing railheads and the front.[51] These were stocked by General Transport Companies controlled by 8th Army or by A.A.I. Use was also made of those versatile units the Beach Groups (Nos. 3 and 21) which often ran the railheads and roadheads under the supervision of Headquarters of an Area or Sub-Area.

During the first half of June 1944 Army Roadhead No. 1 was in the Mignano area where it had been placed for operational maintenance during the Armies' advance to Rome. Army Roadhead No. 2 opened at Valmontone on 15th June, two days before the railheads at Roccasecca and Aquino. Army Roadhead No. 2 was about fifty miles north of these railheads, a distance which indicates the size of the gaps which road transport had to span, and which were to grow much wider. Army Roadhead No. 3 was established in the Narni–Terni area. Its stocking began on 18th June and went so well that it opened on 23rd June, a fortnight earlier than planned. This gain of time was fortunate because by the 30th June 8th Army's leading troops were 200 miles ahead of the railheads, and 130 miles north of Army Roadhead No. 3. This was the period of maximum extension of the Lines of Communication. To make matters worse, heavy rain fell between 18th and 23rd June causing administrative anxiety. There had not been time to make 'hard standings' at roadhead, so supply vehicles soon bogged down in mud. At times only four-wheel drive vehicles could crawl through some of the worst diversions on the roads. Other obstructions included a single-line Bailey Bridge across the Tiber north of Civita Castellana, which impeded traffic until a second bridge was opened on 22nd June, and the narrow main street of Narni, which was not by-passed until 26th June. Army Roadhead No. 3 remained 8th Army's principal supply point and worked to capacity until Army Roadhead No. 4 opened south-west of Arezzo on 28th July.

The main purposes of railheads and roadheads were to provide stocks for the Field Maintenance Centres or Field Maintenance Areas as they were called in some formations, and to hold a quantity of reserves of supplies and stores. An F.M.C. was established by a Corps H.Q. from which its formations drew their requirements and carried them forward to Divisional Maintenance Areas in their own Second Line transport, sometimes helped out by Third Line transport. An F.M.C. usually held two or three days' requirements for its 'customer' formations.[52]

The organization and functions of the Field Maintenance Centre have been described in Chapter I. The units and installations

Digitized by Google

which made up an F.M.C. are listed in the footnote below.*[53] The F.M.C. would leapfrog forward to replace one which was passing out of range of Second Line transport. When possible an F.M.C. was established not more than fifty miles behind the formations it served. The F.M.A.s/F.M.C.s established by 10th and 13th Corps during the advance to the Arno are listed in the footnote below.†

The turn-round of transport companies was usually two or three days, which old Desert hands would have thought pleasantly short.[56] However on the hilly and broken roads of Italy these

---

* In Italy in 1944 the following were normally found in an F.M.C.:

Headquarters	Transit Camp
Ammunition Depot	Provost Detachment
POL Depot	Bulk Issue Store Expeditionary Forces Institutes
Petrol Filling Centre	Assistant Director Ordnance Services Depot
Detailed Issue Depot	Officers Shop
Bakery	Army Post Office
Butchery	Pioneer and Labour Companies
Salvage Depot	Civilian Labourers.

† *See Map 19*

10th Corps[54]	*Date*	*Place*	*Serving*
F.M.A. 504	14th June	10 miles N. of Rome	6th Armoured Division, 8th Indian Division, Some Corps troops.
F.M.A. 505	17th June	Narni	Troops in Narni Area.
F.M.A. 506	30th June	Bastiola near Assisi	All formations, Corps troops.
F.M.A. 507	5th August	N.W. of Arezzo	All formations, Corps troops.
13th Corps[55]			
F.M.C. 117	7th June	Anagni	At various times 6th Armoured Division, 6th S.A. Armoured Division, 4th Division, 78th Division, 8th Indian Division, 9th Armoured Brigade, Corps troops.
F.M.C. 118	11th June	9 miles N. of Rome	All formations.
F.M.C. 119	15th June	N. of Viterbo	At various times 6th S.A. Armoured Division, 78th Division, 9th Armoured Brigade, 4th Division, 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade.
F.M.C. 120	19th June	6 miles N. of Orvieto	6th S.A. Armoured Division, 78th Division, 4th Division, 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, Corps troops.
F.M.C. 121	19th June	Citta della Pieve	All formations.
F.M.C. 122	9th July	10 miles S.W. of Arezzo	13th Corps Ammunition Reserve
F.M.C. 123	20th July	6 miles S.W. of Arezzo	All formations.
F.M.C. 124	4th August	Poggibonsi	6th S.A. Armoured Division, 2nd N.Z. Division, 1st Canadian Division, 8th Indian Division, 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, 21st Tank Brigade, Corps troops.

Digitized by Google

turn-rounds were long enough to mean hard work and strain for the drivers and vehicles. At times 8th Army helped out; for example, it gave five extra G.T. Companies to 10th Corps to establish F.M.A.s 506 and 507 and one extra G.T. Company to 13th Corps for work in F.M.C. 118. Traffic discipline was most important, and was one of the most frequent causes of criticism made of commanders, although few would admit that their units' discipline was less than exemplary. Traffic was heavy: a 24-hour census at Valmontone on 10th–11th June recorded 9,574 vehicles, and at Civita Castellana on 27th–28th June 6,436 vehicles. The 24 hour mean was somewhat over 8,000 vehicles on main L. of C. routes. Two methods of traffic control were used, the second replacing the first.[57] The first was the old orthodox system of sending off convoys of vehicles at a fixed density and speed of about 15 miles in the hour. This was inflexible because a stoppage or check of any kind halted all the vehicles in the convoy. 13th Corps started the system of limiting the flow of traffic to the greatest amount that a road would hold, and calculated this by finding out how many vehicles could pass the worst obstacle on the road in one hour. This number of vehicles was fed on to the road regardless of unit and in any order. Each vehicle moved at its best cruising speed, subject to any regulations about passing. Double-banking was forbidden but the rule was often abused with dire consequences. It was necessary that each driver should recognize his destination by one means or another: map reference, traffic signs, guides, military or unit police on point duty, and so on. This method increased flexibility and ensured that one breakdown did not halt all the others on a stretch of road. In theory it should not have worked but in practice it was found preferable to the orthodox system.

The size of the stock in an F.M.C. depended mainly on the number of formations to be maintained, for how long, and the amount of transport which was available for stocking. For example, F.M.C. 123 held two days' supplies, 75 miles worth of POL, and two and a half days' ammunition for the whole 13th Corps, to mention only the most important commodities.[58] There was never a shortage of any important commodity in 8th Army's railheads or roadheads during the period which we are discussing.[59] The difficulty was always to find enough transport to carry stocks to F.M.C.s, and thus to place them within reach of the R.A.S.C. Second Line transport of formations.*[60]

The place to which R.A.S.C. Second Line transport delivered supplies, stores and other requirements to units, and where bulk

* Fighting strengths at the end of June 1944 were:

10 Corps	92,000
13 Corps	96,786

Digitized by Google

was broken, was the Divisional Maintenance Area or D.M.A. The practice of one formation helping another by taking over part of its maintenance sprang up in Italy. 78th Division and 6th Armoured Division, for example, made this arrangement at a time when both were using the same narrow mountainous roads for supply. The D.M.A. was the penultimate stage in carrying the Duke of Wellington's biscuit to the soldier's mouth. The final stage was perhaps the most difficult. The biscuit might travel forward in a motor vehicle, or on the back of a mule or of a porter, and sometimes by a mixture of the three in succession if the ground was very difficult and the weather bad.

The maintenance of the Polish Corps, which was advancing along Italy's eastern coast, required different arrangements. The Polish Corps took over the railhead at Ortona from 5th Corps on 17th June 1944.[61] This railhead was very well stocked, and the Poles, for a time, needed little more than 500 tons of maintenance stores per day. The Germans in this sector fell back quickly and soon the Poles opened an F.M.A. at Giulianova which meant an eighty mile turn-round from the Ortona railhead. The road was poor, and the crossings of the Pescara and Saline rivers were bad. Nevertheless the flow of supplies, other than engineer stores and bridging, from railhead to F.M.A. was just maintained. It will be recalled that one of the conditions laid down by Alexander for the Polish advance up the Adriatic coast was that it should be carried out without making inroads into bridging stocks needed by 8th Army. Between 17th and 22nd June the Polish Corps advanced at a speed of about ten miles per day to the River Chienti south of Ancona.[62] There the Germans checked their advance and General Anders then decided to make a set-piece attack on 4th July. By this time the Polish F.M.A. had advanced to Porto S. Giorgio and the turn-round from railhead lengthened to 150 miles.[63] The Allied air forces and the Germans had between them destroyed every bridge and culvert on the coast road, and had badly damaged the main inland roads. A scarcity of Engineer units and stores, and of civilian labour, restricted repairs to the coast road only. Railhead had to remain at Ortona because of the decision not to restore the railway line from Ortona northwards. At the suggestion of the D.A. and Q.M.G. of the Polish Corps the Royal Navy provided two tank landing craft (L.C.T.) which took on board stores at Ortona for Porto S. Giorgio on 25th June. This experiment was so successful that a regular L.C.T. shuttle service was inaugurated between Ortona and Porto S. Giorgio. During July 2,545 tons of POL, 3,160 tons of ammunition and 301 tons of Ordnance stores were landed at Porto S. Giorgio.

Digitized by Google

(vi)

The War Office from time to time decided the scale of the General Staff Reserve of Supplies and Stores for the Mediterranean Theatre.* On 31st May 1944 the General Staff Reserve for the Mediterranean Theatre, excluding Malta and Gibraltar, was 45 days plus 45 days working margin.†[64] Separate scales were fixed for POL and ammunition. The Chief Administrative Officer at A.F.H.Q. (at this time Lieutenant-General J. G. W. Clark) was authorized to decide the geographical distribution of the General Staff Reserve, subject to any overriding instructions which the War Office might issue. In the summer of 1944 Base and L. of C. installations in Italy had not expanded sufficiently to hold and handle the General Staff Reserve of 45 days plus the working margin of 45 days, or 90 days in all. The base of calculation was 17 Equivalent Divisions made up of 5 Equivalent Armoured Divisions and 12 Equivalent Infantry Divisions.‡[65] At the end of May 1944 A.F.H.Q. fixed the geographical distribution of the reserves as follows:

(i) Tyres, tracks, gun barrels and some heavy assemblies; four-fifths in Italy, one-fifth in North Africa.
(ii) Ammunition of all descriptions for 30 of the 45 days: twelve-seventeenths in Italy, five-seventeenths in North Africa; the remainder in Middle East.
(iii) Ordnance stores other than those mentioned in (i) above: 30 days for 12 Equivalent Divisions in Italy; 30 days for 5 Equivalent Divisions in North Africa; and the remaining 15 days for 17 Equivalent Divisions in Middle East.

---

* A rough classification of the various kinds of stores is:

Supplies: Food, forage, petrol and lubricants (POL); fuel; lighting; disinfectants; hospital supplies.

Ordnance Stores: Personal and unit equipment including armament; ammunition; vehicles except those held by the R.A.S.C.; clothing.

Transportation Stores: All stores peculiar to the Transportation service.

Engineer Stores: Material and plant required for engineer work of all descriptions.

R.A.S.C. Stores: Vehicles used by the R.A.S.C. and spare parts; material and plant of various kinds.

Medical Stores.

Stationery Stores: A great variety of things from printing presses to postal envelopes.

† A working margin is a quantity of supplies and stores provided to iron out the peaks and troughs in the general working of the supply system.

‡ The term 'Equivalent Division' was a planner's means of simplifying broad administrative calculations.[66] It gave such formations as independent armoured brigades and other specialised formations a percentage equivalence to a standard 'Divisional Slice'. In 1944 a Divisional Slice worked out at:

Organic Divisional troops	16,000
Corps and Army troops supporting	14,000
L. of C. overheads	10,000
	40,000

An independent armoured brigade was assessed at one-third of an Equivalent Division.

Digitized by Google

(iv) Supplies: 30 days for twelve-seventeenths of the *feeding strength* in Italy, and for five-seventeenths in North Africa; the remaining 15 days for the *feeding strength* in Middle East.

(v) All other stores: 30 days for 12 Equivalent Divisions in Italy; for 5 Equivalent Divisions in North Africa; 15 days for 17 Equivalent Divisions in Middle East.

A.F.H.Q. wished to hold the whole General Staff Reserve and the working margin in Italy, but this policy took time to implement because the quantity of stores was immense.[67] The R.A.S.C. alone held some 200,000 tons of the commodities for which it was responsible.[68] It was hoped however that the policy would be fulfilled by 1st January 1945.

Distribution of reserves within Italy had been the subject of protracted discussion between Clark at A.F.H.Q. and Robertson at H.Q. A.A.I.[69] Clark believed that A.A.I. held too great a quantity of reserves in the forward area. Sooner or later these reserves would have to be re-distributed, and this would necessitate double handling and uneconomical use of the various means of transport. During August 1944 agreement was reached and A.F.H.Q. issued instructions about the levels of reserves to be held in the Operational Zone:

(i) Supplies: 15 days.
(ii) Ordnance stores: 20 days.
(iii) Fighting vehicles: 5% of the War Establishments of units.
(iv) Other vehicles: 7,500.
(v) Ammunition: 10 days.
(vi) Engineer stores: 25,000 tons.
(vii) POL: packed, 10 days; bulk, as much as could be held in available storage.
(viii) All other stores: 10 days.

The working margin for all stores except POL was 10 days; for packed POL, 5 days.

(vii)

For the mechanized British forces of World War II petrol and lubricants were as vital as food. The animals of World War I (for example the 5,600 horses in an infantry division) could when necessary work on quarter rations or even on nothing at all for two to three days.[70] In World War II 3,500 vehicles of a division

Digitized by Google

could not run without petrol; nor could aircraft fly. The three kinds of fuel used by the British forces were 80 Octane petrol for some tanks and for most other vehicles, DERV (Diesel Engine Road Vehicles) for Diesel engined tanks and other vehicles, and 100 Octane petrol for aircraft.*[71] The quantities were large, about 49,000 gallons per day for a division or its equivalent.[73] In July 1944 8th Army's Q Staff estimated their daily requirement to be 450,000 gallons.†

By 1944 the arrangements for obtaining POL were regular and efficient. At A.F.H.Q. a Petroleum Section, staffed for the most part by officers drawn from the great American and British oil companies, obtained and consolidated all demands from land, naval and air forces, and also from civilian agencies in the Mediterranean Theatre, and submitted these demands to the Army-Navy Petroleum Board in Washington and to the Petroleum Board in London.‡[74] These Boards allotted supplies of petrol in bulk, and on average between 21 and 22 ocean-going tankers arrived in Italian ports each month from the United States, the United Kingdom and the Middle East.[76] Some 60% of these vessels discharged their oil at ports in the Heel of Italy and the rest at ports on the west coast. The table below gives the average quantities of POL received by A.A.I. from May 1944 to April 1945:

	M T tons		Aviation tons	
	Bulk	Packed	Bulk	Packed
Average stocks	95,000	137,000	74,000	15,000
Max. stocks	126,000	175,000	106,000	37,500
Average monthly receipts	83,000	15,000	122,000	2,500
Max. monthly receipts	166,000	34,500	252,000	8,500
Average monthly issue	63,000	50,000	118,000	9,500
Max. monthly issue	85,000	63,000	167,000	17,000

Between September 1943 and April 1945 inclusive the total amounts of fuel of different kinds in tons which were received in Italy were:[77]

* About 4,000 gallons daily of humble kerosene was needed for the 93,000 oil stoves used by 8th Army alone during the Winter of 1944–45.[72]

† Petrol in bulk storage measures 300 gallons to 1 ton; in barrels and small containers 220 gallons to 1 ton.

‡ By the end of the war the Petroleum Section of A.F.H.Q. had branches at Rome, Padua, Genoa, Bari, Ancona, Athens, Maddalena, Marseilles.[75]

Digitized by Google

Type	West Coast Ports		East Coast Ports		Grand Total
	Bulk	Packed	Bulk	Packed	
100 Octane	207,312	48,187	1,502,022	73,108	1,830,629
87 Octane	—	2,493	—	8,130	10,623
80 Octane	1,330,408	134,367	638,198	245,837	2,348,810
DERV	262,803	34,062	156,289	47,007	500,161
Kero.	47,850	11,606	19,725	18,016	97,197
Lubes and Greases	—	144,426	—	124,843	269,269
Naval Fuel Oil	552,000	—	827,971	—	1,379,971
Total	2,400,373	375,141	3,144,205	516,941	6,436,660

Petrol for British forces was stored and issued by the R.A.S.C. petrol units. There were nine types in Italy in 1944–45 as listed in the footnote.*[78] The R.A.S.C. delivered petrol to the land forces by pipeline, rail and road. The pipeline was an economical means of sending petrol forward because in Italy distances were short compared with those in North Africa. The front line across the Italian peninsula was short and could be served by a small number of pipelines; and the battles were slow-moving. There was, in theory, enough time in which to lay pipelines to points close behind the front. In practice, the rate of advance turned out to be faster than the speed of pipeline construction.[79] A pipeline could be laid at about 5 to 6 miles per day depending on the conditions and the availability of materials and transport.[80] Laying the pipelines and building the storage tanks were responsibilities of the Royal Engineers who consulted the Petroleum Section A.F.H.Q. and the D.S.T. at A.F.H.Q. on the requirements. In all, 2,017 miles of line were laid in Italy.[81] A 6-inch pipeline could deliver 400,000 U.S. gallons and a 4-inch pipeline 150,000 U.S. gallons (or 125,000 British gallons) per day.[82]

---

*

H.Q.s Bulk Petroleum Storage Companies	2
Bulk Petroleum Storage Sections	16
H.Q.s C.R.A.S.C. Petroleum Installations	4
Bulk Petrol Transport Companies	5
Petrol Depots, Types A, B, C	25 in all.
Base Petrol Filling Centres	1
Mobile Petrol Filling Centres	19
Petrol (Technical) Stores Depot	1
Petrol Tin Factory Operating Company	1

The capacity of Petrol Depots was: Type A 12,500 tons; Type B 5,000 tons; Type C 2,000 tons.

The Petroleum (Technical) Stores Depot was an important unit because it stocked 650 different kinds of technical stores.

Digitized by Google

See Map 19

During July and part of August a 6-inch pipeline was laid along Highway 2 (the Via Cassia) from Rome to Vetralla (south-west of Viterbo), and a 4-inch pipeline was pushed forward from Vetralla towards Siena.[83] On the west coast a 6-inch discharge pipeline for tankers was built from the port of S. Stefano to the mainland by 2nd July 1944, and by mid-August a 4-inch pipeline had been laid to Cecina, more or less alongside Highway 1 (the Via Aurelia).[84] On the eastern side of Italy two 6-inch pipelines for the discharge of tankers were built at Ancona by 20th August, and four feeder pipelines from the port of Ancona to the road and railheads at Falconara were completed by 23rd August. On 13th August work began on two 4-inch pipelines pushing northwards from Ancona via Falconara, along the general alignment of Highway 16. By 22nd September these 4-inch pipelines reached Pesaro, and were extended to Rimini by the end of the month.[85]

Until July 1944 most of the petroleum engineering tasks in Italy were performed by American engineers although by this date the Royal Engineers had formed two Pipeline Operating and Maintenance Units.[86] The withdrawal of some American Petroleum Units for the 'Anvil/Dragoon' invasion of Southern France, and the increased demands of 5th Army for pipelines from Leghorn to Florence and thence to its front line left the British engineers to their own resources. The Royal Engineers formed, on 19th July, an Oil Storage and Pipeline Construction Group to repair and build depots for storing petrol in bulk at Ancona, and to build a pipeline towards Bologna.*[87]

Although pipelines were extremely useful they could not satisfy the armies' and air forces' demands for petrol. Rail and road still had to carry the greater part of the fuel which was needed by forward troops and at airfields. 8th Army controlled 704 'rail cistern wagons' of various capacities, and 238 'road tank wagons'

---

* The Oil Storage and Pipeline Construction Group was composed of:
Group H.Q. (including a detachment from U.S. 703rd Engineer Petroleum Distribution Company)
723rd Artisan Works Company R.E.
1st and 2nd Pipeline Operating and Maintenance Units R.E.
28th Electrical and Mechanical Platoon R.E.M.E.
29th Stores Section,
36th Works and Construction Company S.A.E.C.
One G.T. Platoon R.A.S.C.
Italian pioneer companies.
The Group was part of 8th Army Troops. The American detachment was withdrawn at the end of August 1944. The Group built bulk storage depots at Ancona, Pesaro, Viserba (near Rimini); Forlimpopoli (south-east of Forli), and Ferrara. It extended pipelines to the plain of the Po and to Padua by the end of the campaign.

Digitized by Google

each capable of carrying 800 gallons.*[88] Most of the petrol which was sent forward from railhead, roadheads and pipeheads, was carried in cans which became extremely valuable. By 1944 the grossly inefficient 4-gallon commercial tin, used in the Western Desert and known as the 'flimsy', had been replaced by the steel containers copied from the German army and called by the British 'Jerricans', and by small steel barrels.†[89] The American version of the Jerrican was nicknamed the 'Ameri-can'. Between May 1944 and April 1945 about 2,500,000 cans and 670,000 barrels were in use and could be accounted for, but a further 1,000,000 cans and 50,000 barrels, which had been issued, were untraceable.[90] The Italian civilians coveted the cans and stole them. A single search by military police and Italian *carabiniere* in No. 3 District recovered 10,500 cans. Moreover, servicemen used cans for barter to extract various goods from wretched and half-starved civilians, and units tended to leave cans and barrels where they happened to refuel. Sometimes speed was the valid excuse, but more often it was lack of discipline. During the advance to the Gothic Line almost unlimited petrol was available in bulk at Porto S. Stefano but scarcity of cans threatened to interrupt progress of operations.[91]

The methods of carrying petrol and lubricants to consumers changed in detail when circumstances changed, and were devised to suit the needs of various types of consumers: to supply a division in action and an administrative unit situated a few miles from a railhead or pipehead called for different methods. We can however describe the general arrangements made in 8th Army for which 200 miles worth of fuel was stocked.[92] After the first week of August 1944, when the decision was made to switch 8th Army's main thrust to the Adriatic coast, holdings for three armoured and three infantry divisions were positioned on the western side of the Apennines and for three armoured and eight infantry divisions on the eastern side. A substantial Army reserve was also held in Base petrol installations. About 500 tons of petrol were sent each day from Rome to 8th Army's railhead in POL trains, part in railway cistern wagons and the rest packed in containers. 8th Army could also draw 750 tons a day from a pipehead on the 6-inch Rome–Vetralla pipeline.[93] The Q Staff placed two Type B Petrol Depots

* The name 'rail cistern wagon' was coined because requests for 'rail tank wagons' were often answered by the appearance of flats to carry the fighting vehicle. Rail cistern wagons unfortunately were fitted with outlet valves of about a dozen different sizes. All had to be fitted with 2-inch or 3-inch adaptors before they could be used by the R.A.S.C.

† The 'flimsy' could not stand rough handling or travel. A batch of tins might leak as much as 30 per cent of their contents. The steel containers stood up to hard usage and were almost leak-proof. A Jerrican held 4.4 gallons, an Ameri-can 5 gallons, and a barrel from 40 to 44 gallons. The Jerrican was preferred to the Ameri-can because the latter needed a special funnel attachment for pouring.

Digitized by Google

at each railhead or roadhead, holding the 200 miles of packed POL for 8th Army. These Petrol Depots were ready to leapfrog forward in step with the Army's advance. Army pipeheads, each worked by a detachment from a Bulk Petrol Transport Company, filled road tankers and organized Petrol Supply Points for Army troops.

As a rule two Mobile Petrol Filling Centres and one Petrol Depot Type C were given to a Corps. The M.P.F.C.s filled cans for the Corps with petrol drawn from road tankers, and each could handle up to 200,000 gallons daily. The Petrol Depot held a reserve for the Corps of two or three days at 75 miles running per day for each vehicle. When a Corps opened a new Field Maintenance Centre, the Petrol Depot and one M.P.F.C. moved to it. The second M.P.F.C. remained behind until it had cleared up in the previous location and was then ready to leapfrog forward once more. When a Corps was working two F.M.C., one M.P.F.C. was given to each, and the Petrol Depot was split between the two. POL usually reached Divisional Maintenance Areas in cans and was carried forward in Second Line and then First Line transport. Special arrangements had to be made from time to time particularly when the fighting was slow. For instance, the delay in capturing Arezzo led to the formation of a large dump at Magione on the eastern side of Lake Trasimeno. Later, and for the same reason, a similar dump was formed at Poggibonsi, 28 miles south of Florence on Highway 2.

The Royal Air Force was a special type of consumer for whom the Army provided, stored and carried to railhead and roadhead those commodities which were used in common by both services, POL being the largest item. When RAF formations and units were based alongside the United States Army Air Force as part of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, they drew their POL from the American Service of Supply. When they were based by themselves the Army held their POL in bulk in Base depots, and delivered it to bulk storage on the airfields. When there was no bulk storage, the Army delivered POL to a point within three miles of the airfield's perimeter and the R.A.F. then handled it in its own transport. Packed POL for the R.A.F. was also held in Base depots and delivered to Air Ammunition Parks which were usually within 40 miles of the squadrons which they served. If there was no convenient Air Ammunition Park, the Army delivered the packed POL to an Army railhead or roadhead, if possible within 40 miles of the R.A.F.'s airfields. The R.A.F. was responsible for distributing the POL from the Air Ammunition Park or railhead or roadhead in its own transport.

The calculation and holding of POL reserves differed from the

Digitized by Google

other commodities. The General Staff laid down that a minimum reserve of petrol must be 45 days, with a maximum of 75 days. The reserve of lubricants must be at minimum 45 days.[95] The minimum reserve of petrol for 45 days was to be gradually transferred to Italy, and any quantity greater than this was to be held in places anywhere within A.F.H.Q.'s boundaries. Outlying garrisons such as those in Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and North Africa held a special local reserve of 20 days. When the maximum reserves of 75 days petrol had been accumulated, at least 30 days and at most 45 days was to be held in bulk. The packed reserve was to be 15 days at least and at most 30 days. A minimum stock of filled containers for 15 days was held for forces in the Operational Zone in Italy. In Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and North Africa the reserve of packed POL was held in quantities which sufficed for current needs only.

In concluding on fuel it is worth recalling how dramatically the situation had changed since the dark days of 1942 and early 1943. By 1944 the supply of POL for the forces in Italy was abundant and at times greater than the quantities which were authorized. This state of affairs was very different from the Desert campaign when every drop was precious, and even the universal practice of 'brewing up' tea over a little petrol-soaked sand was officially frowned upon. So serious was the supply position that in July 1942 the Chiefs of Staff told the Commanders-in-Chief in the Middle East: 'Should the worst arise, i.e. if we were unable to send you adequate forces and the Russian southern front broke, you must hold on to the Abadan area in the last resort—even at the risk of losing the Egyptian Delta'. Britain could not afford to lose the 13½ million tons of petrol a year which came from Abadan and Bahrein.*

(viii)

The ammunition situation was far less promising and had some similarities to the shell shortages suffered by the British Army in the First World War.[96] Some shortage of shell had occurred during the Winter of 1943–44 and had grown more serious by March 1944.† These shortages were peculiar to the Mediterranean Theatre and were not as yet recognised as a world-wide problem. They were overcome by improved distribution of stocks within the Theatre; by salvage from old battlefields; by small increases in shipments from the United Kingdom; by imposing temporarily a rationing scheme before 'Diadem' in March 1944; and by General Wilson accepting a calculated risk of shortages arising in the second

* See *Mediterranean and Middle East* Volume III, p. 362–6.

† Discussed in *The Mediterranean and Middle East* Volume V, p. 423–25.

Digitized by Google

half of 1944 in order to provide ungrudging artillery support for 'Diadem' and the advance northwards.[97] The shortages seemed to be occurring only in British ammunition, and Wilson, as Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean, impressed on the War Office the dangers which shell shortages would cause if not rectified in time.

During the advance from Rome to the Gothic Line there was no improvement in the rate of artillery ammunition supply. Careful husbandry, expedients of one kind or another and improvisation at staff level ensured that the troops in battle were never stinted of artillery support. The risks Wilson had taken seemed to be justified, but his staff's ingenuity was masking a genuinely growing deficit, which was concealed by the peaks and troughs of expenditure and, to some extent, by the methods of accounting used at the time. The expenditure of British artillery ammunition for the whole of 1944 is shown in the Table below.[98]

Monthly expenditure of ammunition in Italy for 1944.
Based on issues from Ordnance depots.[99]

	25-pdr HE	4.5-in. Gun HE	5.5-in. Gun/How HE	7.2-in. How	4.2-in. Mor
Jan	1,413,999	124,139	211,689	9,819	92,302
Feb	1,239,498	85,983	114,580	8,009	94,202
Mar	1,242,301	129,577	97,633	1,635	92,744
Apr	423,534	43,148	86,162	16,928	167,949
May	721,532	75,994	112,032	20,532	66,204
June	497,309	46,420	63,866	9,166	44,568
July	1,140,936	100,591	209,525	14,881	85,352
Aug	796,432	179,586	270,159	41,112	79,712
Sep	2,125,996	131,831	278,083	25,911	93,708
Oct	1,343,076	131,204	169,342	19,667	73,120
Nov	859,088	69,558	134,673	9,790	47,633
Dec	1,560,791	118,795	176,821	23,575	80,307
TOTALS	13,364,492	1,236,826	1,924,565	201,025	1,017,801
Average Monthly	1,113,708	103,069	160,380	16,760	84,817

Digitized by Google

Note: 1 This is the only run of figures available for the whole year because in August 1944 8th Army changed its method of recording expenditure.
2 The periods quoted do not cover the exact calendar months: thus 'Aug' runs from 3rd–31st August, and 'Sep' from 1st September–4th October.
3 As these are Depot issue figures account must be taken of time-lag and the pre-stocking of forward dumps before a major offensive.

The 25-pdr figures are the best indications of what was happening. It will be seen that in January, February and March, when the battles of Cassino and Anzio were raging, the monthly expenditure was about 1,250,000 rounds, reflecting the bitterness of the fighting. During 'Diadem' expenditure at a monthly rate of 720,000 rounds was remarkably low, because success was achieved and fuel became a dominant requirement as the front broke up and movement came back to the battlefield. In July the battles of Trasimene and Florence and the planned build up for the Gothic Line assault boosted the figure almost to the Cassino/Anzio level at 1,140,000 rounds. In August there was a pause before the battles of the Gothic Line began. These created the alarming peak of 2,125,000 rounds which we will be discussing later. Allied ammunition expenditure had begun to exceed both British and American production.

The reasons for the heavy and increasing demands for artillery ammunition were simple and sound. An authority upon the use of artillery, Brigadier A. L. Pemberton, has written: 'It is well known but often forgotten that the weapon with which the gunner fights is the shell'.*

In the Mediterranean Theatre by the end of 1943 every commander of fighting troops rightly believed that the artillery was the Queen of the supporting arms on the battlefield, and a battle-winner in its own right. Steadily improving signal communications, and rapid and effective development of artillery techniques brought a continued improvement in artillery support. Brigadier Pemberton has written:

> '. . . it was in the control and flexibility of artillery fire that the most striking developments had occurred, and here the Royal Regiment may fairly claim to have led the world. The application of modern radio technique to divisional and corps artillery concentrations had paved the way to a more effective, as well as a more economical, use of the gun. As the war went on, the control of artillery fire became more and more centralized until ultimately it was highly effective at the corps level . . . '

Pemberton mentions another cause of the great demand for shells: 'From El Alamein onwards we had adopted a policy of expending shells rather than lives'.[100] This policy was good tactics as well

* Brigadier A. L. Pemberton: *The Development of Artillery Tactics and Equipment* (War Office, 1950), p. 1.

Digitized by Google

as humane. We have often remarked that the infantry battalion, in which half the strength was composed of specialists, could not sustain heavy casualties in its rifle companies which closed with the enemy and turned him out of his positions with rifle, bayonet, and grenade, and yet still remain effective. Every feasible way of reducing infantry casualties had to be adopted. The most profitable was found to be the increased use of artillery. Alexander's own view was expressed in a letter he sent to Wilson in reply to the Supreme Allied Commander's official letter warning him of the shortage of British ammunition in March 1944. He said:

> 'In all this fighting I am convinced that the concentrated use of field and medium artillery will be the keynote to success. The location of the enemy's positions is difficult; his troops will be well posted and skilfully concealed. Only by a lavish expenditure of ammunition shall we be able to overrun them without suffering heavy casualties'.[101]

The first official warning of a much more serious ammunition shortage came to A.F.H.Q. in a telegram from the War Office on 17th August just before the battles for the Gothic Line were due to begin.[102] The impending shortage was no longer the local domestic crisis which had been felt in the Mediterranean before 'Diadem'. It was a world-wide shortage and affected both British and American Armies. Production targets in both countries had been set too low many months before and the expenditure of 21st Army Group in Normandy had made reductions of supplies to other Theatres unavoidable. We need only note this warning of the coming storm at this stage. We will be discussing its implications and effects in Chapter XV.

There is, however, one other point which is worth noting because it illustrates the growth in the importance and use of artillery ammunition. In the period from the beginning of January to the end of November 1944, 8th Army used an average of 9,000,000 rounds of .303-inch ammunition per month which was fired by all British riflemen and machine gunners.[103] A glance at the Table shows that average expenditure of 25-pdr ammunition during this same period amounted to just over 1,100,000 rounds per month. The 25-pdrs were thus firing one shell for every nine rounds fired by the infantrymen—a very high level of artillery activity.

(ix)

The problem of supplying reinforcements to British units in Italy and indeed in the whole Mediterranean Theatre was to become as intractable as the shell shortage, which it was to comple-

Digitized by Google

ment, but its symptoms appeared much earlier and became acute much sooner. The War Office had agreed in November 1943 that the Theatre's reinforcement holding should be 25,500 of which 20,000 would be allotted to A.F.H.Q.[104] Wilson hoped that this figure would be raised at the March 1944 Overseas Manpower Conference in the War Office. He was warned instead that the figure was more likely to be cut. Britain's manpower was beginning to run out. The Minister of Labour and National Service, Mr. Ernest Bevin, had already told Cabinet colleagues in September 1943 that he could not meet the current demands of the Armed Services, industry and agriculture.*

On 18th March 1944 the War Office warned A.F.H.Q. that a review of the reinforcement situation showed that there would be a world-wide deficiency of 42,000 infantry by the end of September 1944 of which 21,000 would be in the Mediterranean Theatre.[105] 9,250 infantry reinforcements would sail in the April convoy and another 4,000 in the May convoy. Thereafter there would be no more until the end of September at the earliest. A.F.H.Q. would have to depend 'on measures to be initiated by you'. In other words the Theatre must live off its 'hump'.

Harsh though this policy seemed to be there was some 'hump' available. Thanks to the Allied Air Forces' successes in winning air supremacy, many anti-aircraft units were becoming redundant. A special body called the Mediterranean A.A. Advisory Committee was set up at A.F.H.Q. to accelerate the conversion of anti-aircraft artillerymen to other arms, principally to infantry, which had already begun in a small way. The Committee began work in April 1944 and met formally once a quarter thereafter.[106] At each meeting it recommended the disbandment of a number of Light and Heavy A.A. Regiments, together with other miscellaneous redundant headquarters and certain units for which locally recruited replacements could be raised like coast defence, searchlight and administrative units. Representatives of M.E.F. attended so that parallel measures could be adopted in the Middle East.

Nominating A.A. units and others for disbandment could be done quite quickly; retraining and re-raising could not.[107] For instance, the Infantry Reinforcement Training Depot in Italy was not geared to provide basic infantry training which was normally carried out in the U.K. Infantry Training Depots on a man's enlistment. It was found necessary to establish a new training battalion, seven companies strong, at the Infantry Reinforcement Training Depot to carry out the artillery conversion training. Each company was to handle 300 men and was geared to take

* H. M. D. Parker: *Manpower* (H.M.S.O. 1957) p. 210–11.

Digitized by Google

three months to retrain each man. The new training battalion itself required instructors who had to be withdrawn from units, and it was not able to start its training task until mid-June, which meant no relief would be felt in the reinforcement field before mid-September. Pressure described as 'urgent operational reasons' forced a reduction of the syllabus to two months in the middle of the first course.[108]

The Advisory Committee had intended to allot all fit men, other than technicians, to the infantry.[109] A.F.H.Q. calculated that this would provide about 15,000 of the 21,000 expected Theatre deficiency. Before planning had gone far it transpired that the summer convoys would not bring in any reinforcements for supporting arms and that A.F.H.Q. would have to live off its 'hump' for these as well. Serious deficiencies would occur, particularly in artillery, if the original policy was maintained. Consequently it was decided that only 7,000 could go to the infantry. The increased gap would have to be filled by other measures which included the disbandment of two infantry battalions and an anti-tank regiment R.A.; the reduction of the establishment of armoured regiments by one tank troop per squadron, and of divisional anti-tank and light anti-aircraft regiments by one troop per battery.[110] The dilution of Royal Engineer artisan works companies with Italians and of heavy anti-aircraft regiments with Africans was also put in hand, and some reorganization of the infantry support battalion establishments was carried out to produce further economies.

The Middle East played a vital roll in the search for reinforcements by rebuilding battle-torn divisions from Italy during their periods of rest and refit in the Middle East Command.[111] The Middle East School of Infantry was already reorganized and able to retrain A.A. gunners quicker than Italy. Training started with 46th Division in March and was continued with each division as it arrived for refit throughout 1944 and the early months of 1945. 46th Division returned to Italy just ahead of schedule with its authorized 2,826 First Reinforcements.

All these measures and some shuffling of units, like Cape Coloured battalions replacing P.O.W. guard battalions in the Middle East in order to release internal security battalions from Palestine, did, in the end, provide enough reinforcements for the Allied Armies in Italy throughout the summer and until casualties began to mount during the battle of the Gothic Line, the repercussions of which we will be discussing in Chapter XV.[112] The seeds of a rapid decline in infantry strength in the autumn had been sown during the summer months by the inadequacy of the measures taken and their implementation. Selection of units for conversion did not go as quickly

Digitized by Google

as planned.[113] Authority for disbandment was often delayed by the necessity to refer back to the War Office, which was naturally concerned with the longer-term size and shape of the army and the coming transfer of troops to the Far East for the conclusion of the war against Japan. When decisions to disband had been reached it was often found that there were less fit men in units than expected, and many of the units concerned were already well under strength because they had lost priority for reinforcement long before the actual decision to disband was given. All in all, it was one thing to cast figures; it was quite another to produce trained infantrymen in the numbers which were to be needed to make good the heavy losses in the coming battles of the Gothic Line.

(x)

It is axiomatic that armies, navies and air forces fight on their stomachs. Catering, cooking, and distributing food is more difficult in an army than in the other Services because units are at the end of a long supply line and are disposed in small groups in all types of terrain. A warship carries its victuals and has a galley in which to cook them; airmen are based on airfields which are easily accessible by road and exposed only to air attack, and where fairly permanent arrangements can be made for feeding the men. We look, therefore, at arrangements for feeding a British Army which was hardly ever well fed until the catering revolution came about during World War II. In previous wars the soldier's ration had been sufficient to give him only two fairly good and a third skimpy meal each day. In most cookhouses bungling cooks spoiled ingredients even if the quality was good. The Staff officers of Q.M.G.6 (the War Office Branch responsible for catering in the Army), who were pioneers of reform, were Majors R. T. Snowden-Smith and T. W. Richards of the R.A.S.C. (both became Major-Generals during World War II).[114] The first reform came in 1930 when the Q.M.G.'s Branch secured authority to give the soldier a fourth meal daily, followed in 1931 by an increase in the cash allowances for buying more and better food. The War Office appointed a committee to examine the provision of cooks, their training, pay and conditions of service, and standards of catering. The committee recommended improvements, which were made in stages. The outbreak of war in 1939 surprisingly accelerated the improvements because feeding the National Servicemen became a potential political issue. During the thirties the War Office often sought advice from the civilian catering industry and in 1938 Sir Isadore Salmon, Chairman and Managing Director of the great catering firm J. Lyons & Co. Ltd., had accepted an invitation to become Honorary Catering Adviser

Digitized by Google

to the Army. He soon recommended better methods of training cooks and other measures to improve catering. The War Office accepted Sir Isadore's recommendations and began to introduce them quicker than would have been possible in peace time. However it was not until 1941 that the real revolution in the soldier's messing began with the formation of the Army Catering Corps.[115] All the Army's cooks were transferred to this Corps which was responsible for training and administering them, and for posting them throughout the Army. In the Mediterranean Theatre the R.A.S.C. took the fledgling Army Catering Corps under its wing. In Italy Training Centres for Army cooks were set up at Nola (east of Naples) and Salerno, and six Advanced Cooks' Schools were established at other places.[116] The Training Centres turned out good plain cooks, and the Advanced Cooks' Schools produced accomplished chefs.

By the end of the war in Italy a Chief Catering Officer and three officers of the Army Catering Corps were included in the Supply and Transport Directorate at A.F.H.Q.; two officers and two warrant officers on the staff of 8th Army H.Q.; two officers and two warrant officers on the staff of each corps; and one officer and one warrant officer on the staff of each division.

The R.A.S.C. devised about 45 scales of rations to suit the many nationalities who served in the Allied Forces.*[117] Some commodities had to be produced and prepared in ways which complied with religious ordinances, for example Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu. Rations had also to be devised for animals: mules, horses, sheep, war dogs, carrier pigeons, and for the guinea-pigs, rats and mice which were needed by the pathologists in large hospitals.[119]

The standard British Service Ration was based on a daily allowance for a man of 12 ounces of bread or 9 ounces of biscuit, and 10 ounces of fresh meat with bone. To these were added varying scales of about 42 alternative articles such as vegetables, fruit, bacon, cheese, jam and chocolate. When fresh produce such as fruit, vegetables, eggs and fish was surplus to the needs of the civilian population, it was bought by Local Purchase, saving about 37,000 tons of shipping space but costing £1,400,000 per month.[120] The standard drinks were tea, coffee and cocoa. Divisional commanders were authorized to issue a fluid ounce of rum to each man when the weather was very bad or when very great exertion was

---

* The main nationalities in the Allied armies in Italy were:[118]

Allies: *U.S.A.* including negroes and Japanese Americans;
French: Europeans, Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians, Senegalese.
Also: Belgians, Brazilians, Greeks, Jews, Poles, Syro-Lebanese, Yugoslavs.
Commonwealth: British, Australian, Canadian, South African, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Indian, Ceylonese, Maltese, Seychellois, Cypriot, Basuto, Swazi, Bechuana, Mauritian, Caribbean.
Co-Belligerent: Italian.

Digitized by Google

called for. Beer was a scarce luxury and issues were not often more than one bottle to a man monthly. Two ounces of tobacco or cigarettes and two boxes of matches were authorized for each man weekly. Besides the standard Field Service Ration, which included fresh food, there were other types. The best and most useful of these was the 'Composite Ration'. This was composed of preserved food and was issued in packs sufficient for twelve men for a day. The aim was to give the man a good breakfast, a dinner, a substantial evening meal and some snacks. This ration could be eaten cold if no means of heating it, such as the solid fuel 'tommy' cooker, were available. The ingredients included canned meats and puddings of various kinds, biscuits, cheese, chocolate, tea, sugar, and milk-powder.[121] The ration was a masterpiece of culinary and dietetic ingenuity and packing, and it did away with the old 'hard fare' of a tin of meat, a packet of biscuits, and a portion of cheese which the Army had been accustomed to for so long.

Most divisions showed great ingenuity in providing units with satisfying meals even when in close contact with the enemy or in difficult ground and bad weather. The officers and warrant officers of the Army Catering Corps became useful advisers because they lived with the foremost troops, saw conditions for themselves, and suggested methods of overcoming the difficulties. Some divisions used to collect all unit cooks in the B Echelon area to prepare meals centrally under supervision before being carried forward packed in insulated containers to the troops in their battle positions.[122] A common method was to draw half of the bread ration in the form of flour. With this and with other ingredients in the ration the cooks made such things as meat pies, pasties, rolls and scones which were more easily handled in the forward positions. The best evidence of success came from the soldiers whose letters home were far less critical of their meals than hitherto. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Where bad feeding did occur it was usually traceable to poor and indifferent commanding officers and not to the system.

Troops of the Indian Army were the most numerous of those who required non-European food, some articles of which had to satisfy religious requirements.*[123] Indian soldiers were flour and rice

---

* The principal articles of the standard Field Service ration for a man for a day were in ounces:

Atta (Indian flour) 20, or 10 atta and 10 of rice
Ghi (clarified butter) $2\frac{3}{4}$
Dhall (an Indian pulse) 3
Turmeric (aromatic root) $\frac{1}{8}$
Chillies, garlic, ginger $\frac{1}{8}$ of each
Salt $\frac{1}{2}$
Sugar 3
Tea $\frac{1}{2}$
Milk 2

Continued opposite

Digitized by Google

eaters rather than meat eaters, and mutton and goat were the main kinds of meat allowed by their religions. Beef and pork were not eaten.* Two ounces of tobacco or cigarettes were issued weekly to each man. Religion forbade Sikhs to smoke and so a Sikh was allowed four ounces of sugar weekly instead. Alcohol was forbidden to Muslims, but men of other religions were allowed rum and beer. Tea was the main, almost the essential drink, and the sepoy was very ingenious in making it. Usually a pair of comrades carried their ration of tea, sugar and milk and these were 'brewed up' in an old tin in a matter of minutes. The official mess-tin was found to be too clumsy and slow to heat.

The Indian soldier was frugal and his staple diet was the 'chappati', a large, thin, circular cake made from dough compounded of atta and ghi, and baked on a very hot metal plate. Vegetables, cooked and curried in various ways, accompanied the chappati. The Indian Army's cooks in war were 'enlisted followers'. Satisfactory cooking was ensured by following the general peacetime custom of allowing sub-units to acquire and fire their cooks, and by the watchful supervision of an old sepoy in the cookhouse. The Indian soldier liked two hot meals a day when possible; one in the forenoon and one in the late afternoon. His food could be eaten cold but then was neither appetizing nor digestible. A satisfactory cold ration and an 'iron ration' were never devised for Indian troops in spite of much experiment.

The number of 'military' animals in Italy was large: in May 1944, 20,927 mules and 3,379 horses, and by May 1945, 31,669 mules and 7,623 horses.†[125] The Director of Supplies and Transport at A.F.H.Q. organized the purchase and collection of forage for all animals except those belonging to the French Forces. The daily scale of forage for an animal was:[126]

	Horses and Mountain Artillery mules.‡	*Pack mules*
Grain, Oats, crushed Barley	10 lbs	8 lbs
Hay or Tibben	14 lbs	11 lbs
Bedding straw	6 lbs	3 lbs
Salt	2 ozs	2 ozs

Onions 2
Fresh potatoes 4
Meat (with bone) 6
Variants were fresh or dried vegetables other than onions and potatoes, and fresh or dried fruit.

* Indian troops in Italy ate about 124,000 sheep in a year, and these were supplied on hoof by Italy, Middle East and North Africa.[124]

† As an interesting contrast: in September 1918 Allenby's Army in Palestine had 75,000 horses, 40,000 mules, 35,000 camels, 11,000 donkeys. A. P. Wavell: *The Palestine Campaigns* (London 1928) p. 195.

‡ The Artillery mule was much larger than the Pack mule because it had to carry the heavy gun loads.[127]

Digitized by Google

Alternative forage such as grain, carrots, and green fodder might be issued. A large amount of forage was needed, for example 10,940 tons in October 1944.*[128] The main source of supply in Italy was the Foggia plain which was a long way from the front. The carriage of forage, which was very bulky, imposed a burden on road and rail transport. Although the reserve of forage was fixed at 30 days' supply this quantity was never gathered because of the difficulty of collecting it from farmers who took small notice of contracts and delivery dates. There is something rather pathetic in the minute rations allowed to the humble animals which were required by the pathologists in General Hospitals.†[129]

(xi)

A highly mechanized army such as 8th Army was heavily dependent on its repair organization to keep its weapons and vehicles serviceable.[130] While it was the responsibility of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps to supply, store and issue weapons, equipment and vehicles, it was the task of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, formed in 1942, to recover and repair items which had become unserviceable due to enemy action or normal accidents of wear and tear. By the end of the Italian campaign the strength of R.E.M.E. had risen to about 29,000 British all ranks and about 23,700 civilians, mainly Italian. The size of their task can be judged by noting that there were some 120,000 'B' vehicles in the Theatre requiring some 6,000 to 9,000 engine overhauls per month.‡ The tank was the most important fighting vehicle and on 30th June 1944, a date chosen at random, when the Allied Armise were steadily advancing from Rome to the River Arno, 8th Army had 1,272 tanks fit for battle and 47 undergoing repairs in work-

---

* October 1944. Quantities bought in tons:

Straw	254	Oats	5,274
Hay	528	Tibben	3,713
Barley	28	Bran	143

†

	Sheep	*Guinea-Pigs*	*Rabbits*
Barley or oats	¼ lb	¼ oz	¼ oz
Bran	¼ lb	¼ oz	1¼ oz
Hay or straw	3 lb	2 oz	4 oz
Greens	3 lb	2 oz	3 oz

‡ 'A' vehicles: those with a tactical fighting role, 'B' vehicles: primarily administrative.

Digitized by Google

shops or recoverable.*[131] The number of tanks fit for battle increased and at the beginning of April 1945 the 8th Army had 1,751. In Italy, however, it was not the tank which produced the heaviest and highest priority load for R.E.M.E., as it had been in the earlier fighting in North Africa. The tank could not be deployed in the difficult mountainous Italian countryside and the Allies had more tanks in the Theatre than they really needed. It was more often used in the role of an S.P. gun than as a tank. The greatest load was created by the ordinary 'B' vehicle, without which divisions could not be supplied, and which was driven almost to destruction on the twisting and badly paved roads. Transmissions, gearboxes, half-shafts, springs and chassis all suffered and needed high rates of overhaul and repair.

R.E.M.E.'s operations could be divided into three distinct phases: recovery of the damaged equipment to the right type of workshop able to undertake the particular level of repair needed (the more complex, the further back the equipment would have to be taken); repairs short of complete overhaul with quick return to units; and base overhauls with a much slower return to R.A.O.C. for re-issue. We will look briefly at each in turn.

Recovery always offered a wide field for ingenuity and worked well. 78 per cent of all equipment casualties were back with their owner units in 48 hours, which was a very creditable performance in difficult Italian terrain and climate.[132] The demand for Armoured Recovery Vehicles, which had started in North Africa, was not satisfactorily met until June 1944, when the A.R.V. Mark II with a powerful winch and 9½ ton jib reached the Theatre. These vehicles became maids of all work in the forward area and were often used to help the Sappers clear road obstructions as well as for their primary purpose of recovering 'dead' tanks.

The bulk of the day to day repair work was carried out by brigade workshops and their equivalents serving Corps and Army Troops.[133] Each division was provided with one of these fully mobile units per brigade which could either be an infantry brigade workshop organized to repair light armoured vehicles and 'B' vehicles, or a larger armoured brigade workshop capable of handling tanks as

---

* Tanks fit for battle on 30 June:

Sherman I and II	96
Sherman III	513
Sherman V	492
Churchill I	10
Churchill III and IV	66
Churchill ARV	11
Sherman V ARV	6
Grant T2 ARV	10
Grant Command	3
Stuart Recce	65

In workshops or recoverable.

Sherman I and II	1
Sherman III	10
Sherman V	9
Churchill I	3
Churchill III and IV	15
Stuart Recce	9

Digitized by Google

well. Experience showed that this allocation of workshops to brigades could only be treated as a scale of provision. All the workshops in a division had to be controlled on a divisional basis with only the loosest affiliation to the brigades for which they were theoretically designated. In this way the C.R.E.M.E.s of divisions could leapfrog workshops forward in a sequence which enabled the greatest continuity of work to be achieved. A workshop on the move cannot work. During the advance northwards from Cassino the rearmost workshop in a division would be closed and moved as far forward as possible while the other two remained open and working. As the advance progressed the same process would be repeated. Even during static periods workshops did not necessarily service their own brigades. It was found more sensible to give them geographical catchment areas in which to work although, of course, affiliations were taken into account as far as possible. Deployment problems were also complicated by the almost permanent allocation of tanks to infantry divisions. The scale of three infantry brigade workshops per infantry division was found unsatisfactory. The optimum scale was two infantry and one armoured brigade workshop per division whether an infantry or an armoured division.

Similar problems were encountered with Corps and Army Troops workshops which had to be deployed and controlled on an area basis.[134] No separate provision had been made for the Army Groups Royal Artillery (A.G.R.A.s). This proved to be a mistake as these large groupings of artillery regiments were switched from Corps to Corps and tended to overload the Corps Troops workshops. A.G.R.A. workshops were formed, but here again it was found essential not to associate them too closely with specific A.G.R.A.s.

Most of the more difficult R.E.M.E. problems in Italy arose in the Base repair field, and stemmed from two factors: shortage of suitable workshop accommodation for large static workshops and shortage of spare parts. Although cities like Naples, on the west coast, and Bari, on the east, had had excellent civilian workshops and factories suitable for conversion, most of these had been wrecked by German demolition squads or by Allied bombing.[135] Thanks to a major Sapper effort, satisfactory workshops were reconstructed out of the ruins, but it all took time. In the meanwhile the Base repair facilities built up in Egypt and French North Africa had to be used. As late as March 1945 diesel engines were still being overhauled in Egypt.

The spares' shortage was caused by the long 'pipe line' time from the United Kingdom and United States manufacturers and the difficulty of estimating quantities of spares needed for vehicles and equipment, which had never before been used at intense rates under such adverse conditions.[136] The problem could only be overcome by

Digitized by Google

manufacturing the essential spares locally. Fortunately there was enough skilled Italian labour available to set up manufacturing workshops to fabricate spares like half-shafts, which were being expended by the field units at unexpectedly high rates, due to vehicles having to negotiate the rough and often excessively steep diversions round the innumerable bridge and culvert demolitions on all the roads. The scale of the manufacturing effort is illustrated by the July to November figures for M.T. engine guide valves for which 14,000 inlet and 20,000 exhaust types were produced in the four months.[137]

The Base workshops and Advanced Base workshops of R.E.M.E. which kept the vehicles of British forces running in the Mediterranean Theatre during the second half of 1944 were placed, thanks to Sir Brian Robertson's foresight, on both sides of Italy: on the west side near Naples and on the east side at Bari and the adjacent ports of Molfetta and Bisceglie.[138] Workshops for heavy repairs were in Cairo, and other sites in Egypt and North Africa were fully utilized. The allotment of work is interesting. The workshops were established to meet the needs of a force of 17 Equivalent Divisions. Planning was based on the most critical items, e.g. tanks and vehicle engines. The figures for these were:[139]

	CMF Workshops	*MEF Workshops*
Tank engines	375	495 per month
Other heavy duty engines	600	480 ,, ,,
Light 'A' and 'B' vehicle engines	7,700	850 ,, ,,
	8,675	1,825 ,, ,,

The tank engine programme ran satisfactorily; but there was some shortfall in the other heavy duty engines. The lighter engine programme produced a shortfall with an average output of 6,730 engines per month against a requirement for 8,550, but this was raised to 9,000 per month by the end of the campaign. The overall planning yardsticks are also interesting. Frequency of overhaul was:[140]

	Vehicle less engine	*Engine*
'A' vehicles	20% of Theatre holdings	one per vehicle per year
'B' vehicles	25% of Theatre holdings	½ per vehicle per year.

The R.E.M.E. historian makes one particularly important point for the future:

> 'The lack of standardization of mechanical equipment and vehicles in the Army was one of the biggest faults in World War II. It resulted in an excessive wastage of R.E.M.E. repair capacity and had a crippling effect in all echelons of repair due to the colossal holdings of spares necessary to ensure satisfactory workshop programmes.'[141]

Digitized by Google

(xii)

After the re-organization of Air Force administration within Mediterranean Allied Air Forces early in 1944, as described in Volume V pages 403–408, no important changes were needed during the rest of the year. An existing post in Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East was changed from Deputy A.O.C.-in-C. to 'Chief of Staff'. Air Vice-Marshal G. B. A. Baker was appointed to fill the post as from 1st July 1944.[142]

A Chief Maintenance Staff Officer was placed at H.Q. M.A.A.F. at Caserta.[143] He was responsible to the A.O.C. R.A.F. M.E.D.M.E. for policy in the following matters: maintenance and supply, future planning, advice on maintenance 'in the field' of aircraft and engines, scales of equipment and holdings, policy for repair, maintenance and inspection of equipment, and for catering. The C.M.S.O. was, in short the head of a service and could direct the equipment and maintenance staffs of H.Q. R.A.F. M.E.D.M.E., and of operational formations and units in matters which were his responsibility.

A Director of Maintenance and Supply, with his headquarters in Algiers, implemented these policies.* He was responsible for the repair of R.A.F. equipment which the operational units could not undertake, and also for the provision, storage, distribution and control of all R.A.F. equipment and supplies until passed to the operational commands. He had to continue the testing and allotment of aircraft, engines, M.T., marine craft and other R.A.F. equipment to operational commands, and catering. So far as actual maintenance was concerned D.M.S. looked after the Base maintenance units located in Nos. 206 (Middle East), 214 (Italy) and 218 (North Africa) Maintenance Groups. The administration of the Maintenance Groups and units did however remain with the commands in which they were located.

(xiii)

The old adage that successful administration depends upon foresight and judgement was amply born out in Italy in 1944.

---

* In Air Force terminology 'Maintenance' is everything that must be done to provide aircraft and mechanical transport, to keep them serviceable and to replace them when necessary. 'Supply' is the business of providing everything an air force requires other than aircraft and mechanical transport.
In detail:—
Maintenance is the supply, servicing, repair, overhaul, holding and distribution and salvage of aircraft and mechanical transport.
Supply is the provision of petrol, oil, food, medical requirements, in fact of any commodity that an air force needs in order to exist. Supply includes stocking depots, parks, and dumps with such requirements for Maintenance as spares and equipment for aircraft and mechanical transport, bombs and ammunition.

Digitized by Google

Most of the credit must be given to General Sir Brian Robertson and his Staff who set up the Bases and Lines of Communication and operated them with success. It was Sir Brian Robertson's hand which was always on the administrative tiller throughout this period, while other senior administrative officers above and below him changed as the months went by. There were only two critical shortages, both outside his control: ammunition and manpower. It is easy enough to control a supply system in periods of plenty. The true worth of an administrator is shown in his handling of shortages. This always entails a nice judgement of priorities, a determination to enforce unpleasant methods of making ends meet despite the objections of lower formations, an ability to calculate the administrative risks, and the strength of character to take them when the potential operational rewards are high enough. Sir Brian Robertson and his Staff cannot be faulted on any of these counts. The Armies in Italy never went seriously short of anything within their control. The measures taken to mitigate the effects of shortages of ammunition and men were accepted by the Armies as sensible and fair, and enabled Alexander to pursue his operations successfully.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX 1

Order of Battle
Royal Air Force and United States Army Air Force

Mediterranean Allied Air Force—12th May, 1944

NOTES

1. Only operational chains of command and control, and operational formations and units, have been included in this Order of Battle with the exception of air transport and troop carrier aircraft because they were so closely connected with the fighting. The non-operational units omitted include squadrons working up to operational standard or re-equipping, and those very essential units not closely associated with the fighting such as: meteorological, operational conversion, operational training, air communications, radio and radar calibration, and by no means least the air/sea rescue squadrons.

2. Neither does this Order of Battle include the balloon squadrons, nor the many administrative and ground units of all kinds which supported the flying squadrons, such as: maintenance, and repair and salvage units; supply and transport columns; wireless observer units; Army Air Support Control and (later) air support control associated air elements; radar units for air raid warning and fighter control, and their repair and servicing echelons; the large number and variety of signals units; and others. Additionally the R.A.F. Regiment had become involved throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East Theatre, including the Aegean and the Balkans, with a large number and variety of units fulfilling different functions. The need for the R.A.F. to be self-sufficient in repair and other technical requirements has been adequately covered in previous volumes. In Volume V of this Series was described the magnitude of the Allied aircraft maintenance task. The vast organization entailed is shown in skeletal form in Part III. In the field of communications the inevitable growth of requirements as the Allied air forces expanded, and which was described in Volume V of this Series, was further boosted by the Allied invasion of southern France which placed an additional burden on both the R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. signals organizations.

3. Besides all the various ground units mentioned above there were many more employing large numbers of men and women. Space forbids mention of them, but their contribution to the final victory was very real, indeed it was vital to the efficiency and well-being of the Allied air forces at large.

Digitized by Google

ABBREVIATIONS

A.O.P.—Air Observation Post; A.T.—Air Transport; C.—Coastal duties; Det./Dets.—Detached or Detachment/s; F.—Fighter; F.B.—Fighter-bomber; F.B. Recce.—Fighter-bomber reconnaissance; G.R.—General Reconnaissance; H.B.—Heavy Bomber; L.B.—Light Bomber; M.B.—Medium Bomber; N.F.—Night-fighter; P.R.—Photographic Reconnaissance; R.C.M.—Radar and Radio Counter-measures; R.P.—Rocket Projectile Carrier; S.D.—Special Duties; S.E.—Single-engine; S.O.E.—(Special Operations Executive)—Special Duty Operations; Strat.R.—Strategical Reconnaissance; Tac.R.—Tactical Reconnaissance; T.C.—Troop Carrier; T.E.—Twin-engine.

M.A.C.A.F.—Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force
M.A.P.R.W.—Mediterranean Allied Photographic Reconnaissance Wing
M.A.S.A.F.—Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force
M.A.T.A.F.—Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force

Digitized by Google

85th.	Al
12and	U.S. R.
Nos. 37, 70	M
No. 178	H
No. 614	H
Nos. 90, 104	M
Nos. 140, 150	M

	U.S.
20th, 49th, 58th, 409th	H
340th, 341st, 342nd, 414th	H
346th, 347th, 348th, 416th	H
32nd, 33and, 339rd, 419th	H
770nd, 773rd, 774th, 775th	H
815th, 816th, 817th, 840th	H
	U.S.
343rd, 344th, 345th, 415th	H
511th, 513th, 514th, 515th	H
716th, 717th, 718th, 719th	H
700th, 701st, 702nd, 703rd	H
	U.S.
764th, 765th, 766th, 767th	H
864th, 865th, 866th, 867th	H
	U.S.
760th, 761st, 762nd, 763rd	H
776th, 777th, 778th, 779th	H
780th, 781st, 782nd, 783rd	H
868th, 869th, 870th, 871st	H
	U.S.
736th, 737th, 738th, 739th	H
740th, 741st, 742nd, 743rd	H
744th, 745th, 746th, 747th	H
748th, 757th, 758th, 759th	H
	U.S
07th, 71st, 94th	T.J
57th, 58th, 59th	T.J
307th, 308th, 309th	S.S
2nd, 4th, 5th	S.S
95th, 96th, 97th	T.J
317th, 318th, 319th	S.S

	ITALI
4th Stormo, 51st Stormo	S.S
5th Stormo	S.S
88th Gruppo	M.
1st Gruppo	A.
2nd Gruppo	A.
150nd Gruppo	A.
8and Gruppo	G.
8grd Gruppo	G.
8th Gruppo	G.
8th Gruppo	G.
8th Gruppo	S.S
140th Gruppo	G.

NOTE: The numbers of Italian (co-bel unknown.

No. 336 (R.N.A.F.)	S.S
7th. 96	T.J
(7Dets. at El Adem, Tocra, Abu Sueir	R.A
No. 213, 74 (R.A.A.F.)	S.S
(1Det. at Lakemann & St. Jeans)	
No. 250	T.J
5th. 162	R.A
(2Det. at Gambut)	
No. 0 (R.E.A.F.)	S.S

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX 2

Operational Code Names mentioned in Part I of Volume VI

ALLIED

'Anvil'	Allied invasion of southern France, 15 August 1944, re-named 'Dragoon' 1 August 1944
'Buffalo'	6th U.S. Corps' break out from the Anzio beachhead, 23 May 1944
'Chesterfield'	1st Canadian Division's attack on the Hitler Line, 23 May 1944
'Crawdad'	Plan for 6th U.S. Corps to attack on the Ardea–Rome axis
'Diadem'	Allied Spring offensive, and advance on Rome, 11 May–4 June 1944
'Dragoon'	Allied invasion of southern France, 15 August 1944, previously named 'Anvil' until 1 August 1944
'Gardening'	Royal Air Force minelaying in the Danube, April–June 1944
'Overlord'	Allied invasion of Normandy, 6 June 1944
'Pointblank'	Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany from the United Kingdom and Italy
'Rankin'	Outline plans to take advantage of a sudden German collapse, however caused
'Strangle'	Air operation to destroy German rail, road and sea communications south of the line Pisa–Rimini, March–May 1944
'Turtle'	6th U.S. Corps' attack on the Carroceto–Rome axis, 26 May 1944

GERMAN

Rösselsprung (Knight's Move in chess)	Operation planned to destroy Tito's headquarters near Drvar, launched 25 May 1944

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

VOLUME VI (PART I)

CHAPTER I

Preparation for Alexander's Spring Offensive 1944

1 *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V. (HMSO 1973) p.382.
2 *Ibid*, Chapter XVII.
3 AHB ID4/75, letter from Air Chief Marshal Portal, 'Waltz 78' of 26.7.43.
4 John Ehrman: *Grand Strategy* Vol. V (HMSO 1956), p.8–9.
5 WO 204/10388, (AFHQ G3 Plans 20) s.61, ACMF Apprec. 1. CAB 106/408 (AFHQ Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy, hereafter referred to as OBIDFI) Chapter II.
6 CAB 121/593 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1, Vol 2) s.387 COSMED 43.
7 CAB 121/593, s.474, et seq.
8 s.557, COS(W)1288.
9 s.561, JSM 1593.
10 s.579, COS(W)1241.
11 CAB 120/603 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. IV) MA 1251 and T/1062/4.
12 CAB 106/408, p.111, Minutes of Conference.
13 WO 204/10388 s.61, p.5. ACMF Apprec. 1.
14 WO 170/88 (AFHQ Mov WDs) Jan-April 1944.
15 WO 204/10388 (AFHQ G3 Plans 20) s.61: Note by Log Plans on ACMF Apprec. 1.
16 Captain S. W. Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Part I (HMSO 1960). CAB 44/141 (Army Narrative by Major F. Jones: Central Italy April-August 1944) p.2–4.
17 WO 204/10388, *op. cit.* and CAB 44/141 (Central Italy), p.2–3.
18 WO 204/10402, AAI Opin. 50, 25.3.44., and AAI OO 1, 5.5.44.
19 WO 204/10398, HQ AAI, 48/G (Ops) of 25.3.44.
20 *Ibid.*
21 *Ibid.*, 6/G (Ops) Minutes of Conference.
22 CAB 121/593 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1 Vol. 2) s.549, s.562, s.576.
23 *Ibid.* s.586A.
24 CAB 120/603. (PM/412/34/14 Vol. 3). T.696/4.
25 *Ibid.* T.706A/4.
26 A. Bryant: *Triumph in the West* (London 1959) p.163 and 231.
27 COS(44) 118th Mtg (o) in CAB 121/593, s.661A and B.
28 WO 204/10398, s.102A, HQ AAI CGS 224.

Digitized by Google

29 CAB 106/707 (Despatch by Field-Marshal Alexander: *Allied Armies in Italy 3.9.43 to 12.12.44*, London Gazette 12.6.50), p.2922; CAB 106/418 (OBIDFI), Appx C.2 and CAB 106/421, Appx F.2; Lt.-Col. G. W. L. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy 1939–45*, (Ottawa, 1956), p.391–2.

30 CAB 106/419 (OBIDFI), p.11–12.

31 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/EDS I Appx A (EDS Comments).

32 WO 204/481 (History of AFHQ), p.795–800. WO 170/85 (AAI Q WD) April. CAB 106/426 (OBIDFI), p.1. CAB 106/454 (OBIDFI) Administrative Monograph 19: Control of Sea, Rail, Road and Movement.

33 WO 170/85 (AAI Q WD) April 44.

34 *Ibid;* May 44, Appx D.2.

35 CAB 106/456 (OBIDFI), Mono 26, RASC, p.24. CAB 106/457, Administrative Monographs 28, 37, 38 and 42.

36 CAB 106/478. Fifth Army History, Vol. V (Col. John D. Forsythe and Lt.-Col. Chester G. Starr, Italy), p.88. CAB 106/454, Administrative Monograph 19, p.361.

37 CAB 106/454, Administrative Monograph 19, p.8, 12. CAB 106/456. Administrative Monograph 26, p.51, 52–3. WO 204/10380, Log P.50/31, 7.4.44. No. 37 fn(1) CAB 106/456 Administrative Monograph 26, p.23, 59.

38 CAB 106/456, Administrative Monograph 26, p.92, 55. CAB 106/455, Administrative Monograph 24, p.4.

39 CAB 106/575 (MG RE GHQ CMF 9.12.1945: Engineers in the Italian Campaign), p.69.

40 CAB 106/549, p.154–6, 236–7 and CAB 106/551 Appx 18 & 26 (DST AFHQ: History of RASC Services in Italy). WO 170/85 (AAI Q WD) May 44.

41 WO 204/10407 (AFHQ: Field Artillery) s.13A, 26/2G (Ops).

42 WO 204/10413, 8th Army M/1337/G(P), 26.4.44.

43 CAB 121/593 (SIC/F/Italy/6 Vol. 2), s.498.

44 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1 (DFB: The Reinforcement Problem) and CAB 106/451 Administrative Monograph 4.

45 CAB 106/426 (OBIDFI), Appx B. CAB 106/478 (5th Army History), p.4–5. WO 170/207. (8 Army Q WD) March 44.

46 CAB 106/478 (5th Army History), p.4–5. WO 170/207, (8 Army Q WD). CAB 44/168 (Brig. W. P. Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects and Operational Maintenance of the Campaign in Italy), Appx 4, Appx C.

47 WO 170/206 (8 Army A WD) May 44. WO 170/85 (AAI Q WD) May 44, Folder C. Brig. A. L. Pemberton: *The Development of Artillery Tactics and Equipment*, (WO 1950) p.213.

48 CAB 44/167 (Brig. Pessell *op. cit.*), p.124, Appx 9. CAB 106/426 (OBIDFI) Appx C.

49 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/1 (Air Contribution by Gp Capt. Gleave); CAB EDS 17, Chapter 1, p.31.

50 AHB II J1/32.

51 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/1, p.21.

Digitized by Google

52 *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume V, Chapter XIX and CAB HIST AL/3000/F/Air/1, p.7–11.
53 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/14 (Correspondence with A. V. M. Slessor, 1973).
54 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V. Ch. XXI.
55 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/1, p.2 with addition of MATAF's sorties in Appx C.
56 *Ibid.* p.12–15.
57 *Ibid.* Appx C.
58 *Ibid.* p.16–20.
59 CAB EDS 17, Chapter 2, p.9. AHB RAF Narrative: *The Italian Campaign*, p.311–6.
60 CAB EDS 17, Chapter 1, p.44.
61 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/14 (Correspondence with A. V. M. Slessor, 1973).
62 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/1, p.6–21 and Appx A.
63 CAB EDS 17, Chapter 1, 33–6. CAB HIST AL 3000/Air/F/1, p.4–5.
64 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V, Chapter VII.
65 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.31–3.
66 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.38–41.
67 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.1–3, 12–15, 17.
68 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.18–19, 20–28, 56.
69 WO 170/206 (8 Army A WD) April 44.
70 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.27–8 and Ch. 2, p.52.
71 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 2, p.41.
72 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.61–3, Ch. 2, p.43, 45–51, Ch. 3, p.29–31, and Field Study 1, p.4.
73 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.55, Ch. 2, p.17, 33–4, 50, 52. CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.222.
74 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.60–1, Ch. 2, p.19, 63–5, and Field Study 1, p.2.
75 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.60–1.
76 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 2, p.55.
77 AHB IIJI/32. *The Army Air Forces in World War II* Vol. III (U.S.A.F. Historical Division, Chicago 1951). ORBs for MATAF, DAF, MACAF, No. 205 Gp, No. 242 Gp, No. 232 Wing, No. 23 Sqn.

Digitized by Google

VOLUME VI

CHAPTER II

The Spring Offensive: Plans of the Allied Armies, Corps, and Air Forces

1 Maps:
1: 100,000 GSGS 4164 Ed. 1943.
1: 50,000 GSGS 4229 Ed. 1943.
1: 25,000 Ext. to GSGS 4228 by Engineer 5 Army 1944, and WO 204/4228 (Air photograph of Cassino Massif).
2 CAB 106/478 Fifth Army History Vol. V. (Col. John D. Forsythe and Lt. Col. Chester G. Starr, Italy) p.8–9. CAB EDS 15, Ch. 1, p.25, EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.90–1.
3 WO 204/10402 AAI Operation Order 1.
4 CAB 121/594 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1. Vol. 3), s.860.
WO 204/10407 (AFHQ Q.1 Field Artillery), 26/2G (Ops) 21.3.44.
5 WO 170/160. (8 Army G Ops, Main WD). May 44, Appx O.
6 WO 204/10416 (8 Army G Plans), M/1314/G/(P). 31.3.44.
7 Lieut.Gen. W. Anders: *An Army in Exile* (1949).
8 WO 170/85 (AAI Q WD) May, Appx C.
WO 170/88 (AAI Q Movements Adv. Admin. Ech. WD) May Appx D.
WO 204/7833 8 Army Admin. Bulletin 277.
9 Colonel P. Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (Ministère des Armées, Paris, 1969), p.84.
10 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.175.
11 *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V, p.592, fn(1).
12 WO 204/10396, s.21A, M 1327/G(P), 8 Army: Rept on visit to FEC, 30.5.44.
13 CAB 106/478, p.26–29 (Fifth Army History).
14 *Ibid.* p.28, 30, 33 and 36.
15 CAB. HIST. AL 3000/F/Air/2. (Air Contribution by Gp Capt. Gleave).
16 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.61–3, Ch. 3, p.29–31.
17 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 2, p.65.
18 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.1.
19 CAB EDS 16, Ch. 4, p.10–11, 30–31, 36, 44, 48–49, 54, 59, 92.
CAB EDS 16, Ch. 6, p.13, 36, 41, 44, 47–49, 61.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 2, p.21, 44, 46, 48; Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.5.

Digitized by Google

20 CAB EDS 16, Ch. 1, p.78. Ch. 4, p.91, 96.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 2, p.18, 43.
21 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.20, 23.
22 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.60–61.
23 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.3–4.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.30.
24 CAB EDS 17, Field Study (Pt 1), p.6.
25 Division and Regimental Histories, including H. Williamson: *The Fourth Division* (London 1951), p.122. Lieut.-Colonel J. J. Burke-Gaffney: *The Story of the King's Regiment 1914–1948* (Liverpool 1954), p.133.
26 *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V, Ch. XIII.
27 WO 7526 1945, Table 24. RE Supp. Pocket Book No. 3.
WO 204/10421 (CE 13 Corps Rept: The Liri Battle), Appx E.
CAB 106/444 (AFHQ: Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy, hereafter referred to as OBIDFI), p.91A.
28 CAB 44/141 (Army Narrative by Major F. Jones: Central Italy April–August 1944), p.73, 89.
29 WO 170/160 (8 Army G WD), May, Appx O.
CAB 106/478, p.222.
30 Brig. A. L. Pemberton: *The Development of Artillery Tactics and Equipment* (WO 1950), p.213.
31 *Ibid.* Map 11.
32 CAB 106/575 (MG RE CMF: Engineers in the Italian Campaign, 9.12.45.), p.35.
33 CAB 44/141, p.89.
WO 170/210 (CE 8 Army WD) May 44.
WO 204/10420, CE 13 Corps: The Liri Battle.
34 Pemberton: *The Development of Artillery Tactics* (*op. cit.*), p.214–5.
35 CAB 44/141 (Jones: Central Italy *op. cit.*), p.65–66.
CAB 106/587, 8 Indian Div Report.
36 CAB 44/141, p.90.
37 Williamson: *The Fourth Division* (*op. cit.*), p.123, 130.
CAB 44/141, p.90–93.
38 CAB 44/141, p.91. CAB 106/587, (8 Indian Div Report), p.18–19. Lieut.-Col. G. W. L. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy* (Ottawa, 1956), p.687, 692.
39 WO 204/10415 (8 Army G Ops) s.10a, p.1.
40 CAB 106/587 (8 Indian Div Report), p.4. *The Tiger Triumphs*, (HMSO 1946), p.68. F.C.C. Graham: *History of the 1st Argylls* (London 1948), p.90.
41 WO 204/10420 CE 13 Corps Report. *The Canadians in Italy* (*op. cit.*), p.402–3.
42 WO 204/8221 Ops of 2 Polish Corps against Monte Cassino, May 1944.
WO 204/8222 Summary of 2 Polish Corps Ops: Corps Plan for Op. 'Honker'.
43 CAB 101/223 (D. F. Butler: Build up of 2 Polish Corps).

Digitized by Google

44 CAB 44/141, p.73–4.
WO 204/10423. 2 Polish Corps Operation Orders.
45 Pemberton: (*op. cit.*), p.213–4.
46 Polish Corps Admin. Plan 2255/Kwat/Tj, 30 April, in WO AFHQ 6660/1.
47 WO 204/10428 (5th Northamptons in Italy), p.87.
48 Pemberton: *op. cit*, p.213.
49 Le Goyet *op. cit.*, p.265, 287–295. Colonel Goutard: *Le Corps Expeditionnaire Française dans la Campagne d'Italia* (Paris 1947), p.7 and 86.
CAB 106/478, p.16, 36, 252–3.
CAB 101/226 (D. F. Butler: The FEC in the Battle for Rome), p.6, 9.
50 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.3. Le Goyet, *op. cit.*, p.85–6.
51 Le Goyet, p.264.
52 *Ibid.* p.87, 272–3.
53 CAB 106/478, p.25. Le Goyet, p.88, 277–281.
54 Le Goyet, p.274.
55 *Ibid.* p.273–4, 277–280.
56 *Ibid.* p.277–281. WO 204/10396 s.21A, M 1327/G(P) 8 Army: Rept on visit to FEC, 30.5.44. and attached map, 1:50,000.
57 8 Army: Report on visit to FEC, *op. cit.*
58 *Ibid.* Appx D.
59 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.229–253.
60 *Ibid.* p.25, 27, 55–7.

Digitized by Google

VOLUME VI

CHAPTER III

5th and 8th Armies break the Gustav Line 12th to 18th May 1944

1 WO 170/206 (8 Army A WD) May.
CAB 101/226 (D. F. Butler: The French Expeditionary Corps in the Battle for Rome), p.6.
CAB 106/478 Fifth Army History, Vol. V (Col. John D. Forsythe and Lt-Col. Chester G. Starr, Italy), p.211.

2 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/13 (DFB: Selected extracts from Unit War Diaries and regimental histories giving 'human interest' and general background material for 'Diadem'), p.2, 5.

3 WO 170/88 (AAI Q Movements WD) May, Appx D.
CAB 106/478 Fifth Army History, Vol. V. (Col. John D. Forsythe and Lt. Col. Chester G. Starr, Italy), p.33. AL 3000/F/13 p.2B.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.1–2. WO 204/7833(8 Army Admin Bulletins) May.

4 CAB 106/478, p.12.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.2.

5 CAB 106/478, p.62–3.

6 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.2 and *AOK 10* Map 11–16 May in CAB HIST AL 1915/2.
CAB 106/478, p.58–61.

7 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.7–10.

8 Colonel P. Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (Ministère des Armées, Paris 1969), p.99, 102.

9 WO 204/10396 S.21A, M 1327 G(P), 8 Army Report on visit to FEC, 30.5.44.

10 R. Chambe: *L'Epopée Française d'Italie* (Paris 1952), p.106.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.2.
CAB HIST AL 3000/F/15 (EDS Supplementary Note of 22.6.70.)

11 CAB 106/478, p. 36–7.

12 Chambe *op. cit.*, p.106–107.
Le Goyet *op. cit.*, p.102–103.
CAB 101/226 (*op. cit.*), p.13–14.

13 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.7–9.

14 Regimental Histories, and
CAB HIST AL 3000/F/EDS III (EDS Comments).

Digitized by Google

15 D. S. Daniell: *The Royal Hampshire Regiment*, Vol. III (Aldershot 1955), p.167.
16 D. S. Daniell: *The East Surrey Regiment* (London 1957), Vol. IV, p.208.
CAB HIST AL 3000/F/13 (*op. cit.*), p.5.
17 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/13 (*op. cit.*), p.5.
18 Lt-Col. H. F. Joslen: *Orders of Battle* (H.M.S.O. 1960), Vol. I, p.275, 313, 448.
19 H. Williamson: *The Fourth Division* (London 1951), p.126, 129–139.
20 WO 170/160 (8 Army G Ops Main WD) May, Appx M.
21 CAB 106/587 (8 Indian Division Report II), p.5–10.
Regimental Histories.
Lt-Col. G. W. L. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy 1939–45* (Ottawa, 1956), p.403.
22 WO 204/8221 (Operations of 2 Polish Corps against Monte Cassino), para. 81.
WO 204/8222 (Summary of 2 Polish Corps' Operations), p.39.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 2, p.48.
23 WO 204/8221, p.31.
24 WO 204/8222, p.29.
25 WO 204/8221, p.28–33.
WO 204/8222, p.12–15.
26 WO 204/10393 (WO AG Stats: Italy Battle Casualties) Returns of May.
27 CAB 121/594 (SIC F/Italy/6/1 Vol. 3) S.721, MA 1259.
28 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.31.
CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/2 (Gp Capt. Gleave: Air Contributions 'Diadem'; Air Plan and operations to dawn 19 May), p.7–8.
29 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.7–10.
30 *Ibid.* p.18–20.
31 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/15, p.3 (EDS Note of 22.6.70 on Schulz Battle Group).
32 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.31–2.
33 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.8.
34 WO 204/10420 (CE 13 Corps Report: The Liri Battle).
WO 204/10421 (RE Plans and Trace, Op. 'Honker').
35 Williamson: *The Fourth Division*, (*op. cit.*), p.139–144.
36 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.20.
37 *Ibid.* p.11, 20–21.
38 *Ibid.* and CAB HIST AL 3000/F/13 (DFB: Selected Extracts from Unit WDs, (*op. cit.*), p. 7).
39 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.21.
40 *Ibid.* Williamson: *The Fourth Division*, p.148–150, and
CAB HIST AL 3000/F/13, p.6.
41 CAB 44/141 (Army Narrative by Major F. Jones: Central Italy April–August 1944), p.103.
Cyril Ray: *Algiers to Austria* (London 1952), p.124–6.
42 D. Pal: *The Campaign in Italy* (I.O.H., Calcutta, 1960), p.168–79.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.19–21.

Digitized by Google

Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy* (*op. cit.*), p.403–6.
43 CAB 44/141, p.103–110.
44 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.10, 21–22.
45 Ray: *Algiers to Austria*, p.126–127.
Williamson: *The Fourth Division*, p.152–3.
CAB 44/141, p.105, 109.
46 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.23.
47 *Algiers to Austria*, p.130.
48 Pal: *The Campaign in Italy*, p.179–183.
Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy*, p.407–8.
49 CAB 121/594 s.729, MA 1216.
50 Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.108.
CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.67–71.
51 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.32–5 and Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.18, 23–4.
52 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.16, 33.
53 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.31.
54 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.13.
55 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.8, 16, 33, 46.
56 CAB 44/141, p.114.
57 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.32.
58 WD 170/160 (8 Army G Ops Main WD) May Appx D Op. Instr. 1421.
59 CAB 44/141, p.114.
60 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.32–33.
61 WO 204/8221 (Operations of 2 Polish Corps *op. cit.*), p.40–2.
WO 204/8222 (Summary of 2 Polish Corps Operations), p.15–16.
62 WO 204/8222, p.16–18.
63 *Ibid.* and WO 204/8221, p.40.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.32.
64 WO 204/8221, p.41–4.
WO 204/8222, p.18–20.
65 Williamson: *The Fourth Division*, p.153–4.
66 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.32–5.
67 Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.103–6.
Chambe: *L'Epopée Française d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.141–7.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.9.
68 CAB 101/226 (D. F. Butler: The French Expeditionary Corps in the Battle for Rome), p.17–18.
Le Goyet, p.106–107.
Chambe, p.163.
69 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.9–12.
70 CAB EDS 16, Ch. 6, p.15–16.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.58, Ch. 2, p.19, 42.
CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.9.
71 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.12–14. Le Goyet, p.107. Chambe, p.183–9.
72 Chambe, p.180.

Digitized by Google

73 CAB EDS, 17 Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.12–13.
74 CAB 106/478, p.63–7.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.8–17.
75 *Ibid.* p.15–18.
76 *Ibid.* p.17–18.
77 Le Goyet, p.108–110.
Chambe, p.215–7.
78 Chambe, p.223; air reconnaissance report.
79 *Ibid.* p.229.
80 Chambe, p.177–9.
Colonel Goutard: *Le Corps Expeditionnaire Français dans la Campagne d'Italie* (Paris 1947), p.122–3.
81 Le Goyet, p.292–6.
82 Chambe, p.179 and p.243.
83 *Ibid.* p.179, 217, 236.
84 *Ibid.* p.177–189.
85 Le Goyet, p.107.
86 Chambe, p.215–6.
87 *Ibid.* p.230–6.
88 *Ibid.* p.236–8.
89 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.67.
90 *Ibid.* p.69–71.
91 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.25–7.
92 *Ibid.* and
Le Goyet, p.109–110.
Chambe, p.238, 242–9.
93 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.46–7.
94 *Ibid.* p.70–1.
95 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.27–8.
96 Le Goyet, p.112.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.29–31.
97 WO 204/10396 s.21A, M 1327/G(P), 8 Army Report on visit to FEC, 30.5.44, including 1 : 50,000 map.
98 CAB 106/478, p.71.
99 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.30–1.
100 CAB 121/594 s.741, MA 1275.
101 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3
(Air Contribution by Gp Capt. Gleave), p.34 Appx C.
102 *Ibid.* p.1–3, 19 and AL 3000/F/Air/2
(Air Contribution by Gp Capt. Gleave), p.7, 13.
103 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3, p.18.
104 *Ibid.* p.34.
105 References for table:
CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/1 Appx. C.
AL 3000/F/Air/2, p.9, 12.
AL 3000/F/Air/3, Appx. A.
106 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/2, Table II.
AL 3000/F/Air/3, Appx. A.
AL 3000/F/Air/4, p.54.

Digitized by Google

107 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/2, p.7–9, 12.
108 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/2, p.10–11.
109 *Ibid.*
110 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3, p.13, 15.
111 References for tables:
AHB IIJ1/32, IIJ11/1, No. 232 Wing RAF ORB, No. 205 Group RAF ORB, IIM/A41/1A and 1B, MATAF ORB.

Digitized by Google

VOLUME VI

CHAPTER IV

5th and 8th Armies break the Hitler Line 19th to 25th May 1944

1 CAB 121/594 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1 Vol. 3) s.741, MA 1275.
WO 204/10402 AAI OO 1, 5.5.44.
2 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.43.
3 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers) Messages unnumbered.
4 *Ibid.* MA 1271 of 18.5.44.
5 WO: *Tactics of the German Army* (1944), Vol. 1, p.32–3, 35.
6 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.13, 47, 66–7.
7 *Ibid.* p.42–4.
8 *Ibid.* p.40–1; Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.37–8.
9 CAB 106/478 Fifth Army History, Vol. V (Col. John D. Forsythe and Lt-Col. Chester G. Starr, Italy), p.79–81, 93. And:
10 Colonel P. Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (Ministère des Armées, Paris 1960), p.110–114.
11 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.37–8.
12 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.39–40.
13 *Ibid.* p.33 and Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.31.
14 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.40.
15 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.83–5.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.37–9 and Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.41.
16 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.40–2.
17 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.45.
18 CAB 106/478, p.85–7.
19 Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.110–4. R. Chambe: *L'Epopée Française d'Italie 1944* (Paris 1952), p.251, 260–2.
CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army history), p.89–91.
20 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.41–2.
21 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.33 and 35.
22 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.40.
23 Chambe: *L'Epopée Française d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.266–8.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.42–3.
CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.91.
24 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.47–8.
25 CAB 106/478, p.89.

Digitized by Google

26 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.41–2 and Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.45.
27 Lt-Col. G. W. L. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy* (Ottawa 1956), p.407–11. And for OB: p.687–9 amended by p.479–80.
28 WO 170/160 (8 Army G Ops Main WD) May Op. Instr. 1421.
29 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.34, and Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.25, 31–4.
30 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.33 and Supplementary Note by EDS (22.5.72) in CAB AL 3000/F/16.
31 CAB 106/419 (AFHQ: Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy hereafter referred to as OBIDFI), p.54.
32 CAB 106/421 (OBIDFI), Appx D.4.
33 Canadian Corps Op. Instr. 9.
34 CAB 106/419 (OBIDFI), p.49–50.
CAB 44/141 (Army Narrative by Major F. Jones: Central Italy April–August 1944), p.125, 134.
35 Lt-Col. H. F. Joslen: *Orders of Battle* (HMSO 1960), Vol. I.
36 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.49.
37 CAB 44/141. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy*, p.410. Cyril Ray: *Algiers to Austria* (London 1952), p.133–4.
38 Nicholson: (*op. cit.*), p.411. War Diaries of British formations. WO 204/8202 (1 Cdn Div Report).
39 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.39 and Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.49.
40 WO 170/160 (8 Army G Ops Main WD), May Appx O.
41 WO 204/8207 (5 Cdn Armoured Div Report) Report by 5 Armoured Regt, p.2.
42 The main authorities for the following account of the defences of the Hitler Line are:
CAB EDS 15 High Level November 1943, p.59, 61–3.
Field Study 4, p.66–7
Field Study 6, p.47–8
EDS 16 Ch. 1, p.42–3
Ch. 2, p.12, 103–5
Ch. 6, p.17
EDS 17 Ch. 1, p.58
Ch. 2, p.59
Ch. 3, p.46
EDS Note: New German Weapons in Italy in 1944 in CAB AL 3000/F/37.
WO 204/8209 Report on Hitler Line Defences by 1 Cdn Div.
WO 204/8202 1 Cdn Div in the Liri valley.
Cdn Hist. Sec. (Ottawa) Report No. 20 (from German Documents).
WO: *Tactics of the German Army* (1944) p.11.
43 WO 204/8209, p.3.
44 *Ibid.* p.3, 11–12.
45 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.33 and Field Study 1 (Pt 1), p.18, 21–22, 31–2 and (Pt 2), p.52. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy*, p.403.
46 *Ibid.* p.411 and WO 204/8202.
47 WO 204/8203 Report by CCRA Cdn Corps, Appx E.
48 *Ibid.* and WO 204/8202 Report by CRA 1 Cdn Div.
49 Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy*, p.413.

Digitized by Google

50 *Ibid.* p.414 and WO 204/8202 1st Bde Appx.
51 WO 204/10418 Armoured Operations in Italy, p.4.
52 WO 204/8202 1 Cdn Div Report Appx A.
53 WO 170/591 (25 Tk Bde WD) May Appx 8. WO 204/8202 Reports by Units and by CRE. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy*, p.419.
54 WO 204/8202 Bn Report.
55 WO 204/10418 Armoured Operations in Italy, p.4–5
56 WO 204/8202 1 Cdn Div Report.
57 WO 204/8203, Report by CCRA Cdn Corps p.23–4.
58 Imperial War Museum: Papers of Capt. H. R. H. Lyster, 27 May 1944.
59 WO 204/8202 Unit Reports.
60 *The Canadians in Italy*, p.421–5.
61 CAB AL 3000/F/13 Pt II (DFB: Note on 25 Tank Bde's Attack).
62 WO 170/160 (8 Army G Ops Main WD) May Appx M. WO 204/8205 Cdn Corps Report.
63 Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.11.
CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.87.
CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.62.
64 Cdn Hist. Sec. (Ottawa) Report No. 20 (from German documents), p.75.
65 Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy*, p.439, 442–6. WO 204/8207 5 Cdn Armd Div Report.
66 WO 204/8207 (5 Cdn Armd Div Report) Regimental Report.
67 CAB EDS 17, Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.51, 64.
68 *The Canadians in Italy*, p.430–1.
69 *Ibid.* p.434–5.
70 CAB 44/141 (Army Narrative *op. cit.*), p.158.
71 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.47–8 and Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.63–65.
72 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.52 and Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.61, 65–66.
73 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3 (Air Contribution by Gp Capt. Gleave), p.14–17.
74 *Ibid.* p.6.
75 *Ibid.* p.16.
76 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.38, 41, 45, 48.
77 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3, p.1–2.
78 *Ibid.* p.3.
79 *Ibid.* p.3–4.
80 *Ibid.* p.5.
81 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.58–9, 65.
82 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3, p.8.
83 *Ibid.* p.9–10.
84 *The Army Air Forces in World War II* (University of Chicago Press 1951) p.391, ed. W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate. AHB IIM/A41/1 (MATAF ORB).
85 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3, p.19 and Appx A.
86 *Ibid.* p.20.
87 *Ibid.* Table I.

Digitized by Google

88 *Ibid.* p.26–7.
89 *Ibid.* p.28–9.
90 *Ibid.* p.32–33.
91 *Ibid.* p.30–31.
92 References for Table: AHB IIJ1/32, IIJII/1, No. 232 Wing RAF ORB, No. 205 Group RAF ORB, IIM/A41/1A and IIM/A41/1B, MATAF ORB.

Digitized by Google

VOLUME VI

CHAPTER V

'The Allies are in Rome'

1 CAB 120/603 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. IV) T.1092/4.
CAB 106/478 Fifth Army History, Vol. V (Col. John D. Forsythe and Lt-Col. Chester G. Starr, Italy), p.244–251. Lt-Col. H. F. Joslen: *Orders of Battle* (HMSO 1960), Vol. I, p.35–6, 47.
2 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.106–7. Lt-Gen. Truscott: *Command Missions* (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1954), p.366–9.
3 CAB 106/478, p.106–7, 187.
4 *Ibid.* p.101–2 and Map 13, p.116.
5 *Ibid.* p.104–5.
6 CAB EDS 16, Ch. 5, p.50, EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.44, 72 and *AOK 14* Map of 17.5.44 in CAB AL 1916/1.
7 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.33, 43–6. Truscott: *Command Missions* (*op. cit.*), p.359–369.
8 Lt-Col. G. W. L. Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy 1939–45* (Ottawa, 1956), p.397. CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.48.
9 CAB EDS 16, Ch. 3, p.51, Ch. 5, p.46, Ch. 6, p.16–20. EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.43, Ch. 2, p.18–19, 23.
10 CAB 120/603 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. IV) T.1092/4.
11 WO 214/33 (Alexander Papers) s.28. CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.108. Truscott: *Command Missions* (*op. cit.*), p.370–1.
12 CAB 106/478, p.108.
13 Truscott: *Command Missions* (*op. cit.*), p.376.
14 CAB 106/478, p.110–2.
15 CAB 121/594 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1) s.749, MA 1287.
16 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.45.
17 Cdn. Hist. Sec. (Ottawa) Report No. 20 (From German Documents), p.72.
18 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.112–3.
19 CAB 121/594 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1) s.758, MA 1291.
20 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.45, 49.
21 *Ibid.* p.47, fn.4.
22 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.114–6.
23 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.50.
24 *Ibid.* p.87–8.
25 Truscott: *Command Missions* (*op. cit.*), p.375.
26 *Command Decisions* Ed. K. R. Greenfield (London, 1960), p.281.

Digitized by Google

27 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.117–8, 192 (5 Army Op Instr 24 26.5.1944).
28 CAB 120/603 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. IV) Italy, T.1144/4 27.5.44, T.1148/4 28.5.44.
29 *Ibid.* T.1157/4 30.5.44.
30 *Ibid.* T.1159/4 31.5.44.
31 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.64, 66, 70.
32 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers), MA: 1286 22 May, 1287 23 May, 1291 24 May, 1297 26 May, 1306 29 May, 1312 31 May, 1320 3 June, 1322 4 June.
33 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.183.
34 WO 170/160 (8 Army G Ops Main WD) May Appx D.
35 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.47–8 and Field Study 1 (Pt 2), p.61, 65–66.
36 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.38, 43, 48, 58–9.
37 *Ibid.* p.50–2.
38 *Ibid.* p.52.
39 *Ibid.* p.50.
40 *Ibid.* p.52–3.
41 CAB 106/587 (8 Indian Div Report), Ch. 8, p.2.
42 Joslen: *Orders of Battle* (*op. cit.*) Vol. I, p.129–31.
43 C. F. Comfort: *Artist at War* (Toronto 1956), p.149.
44 CAB 44/141 (Army Narrative by Major F. Jones: Central Italy April–August 1944), p.177.
45 Regimental Histories.
46 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.53–8.
47 CAB 44/141 (Jones: Central Italy), p.179, 185.
48 Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy* (*op. cit.*), p.439–442.
49 *Ibid.* p.440–1.
50 *Ibid.* p.434.
51 CAB 44/141 (Jones: Central Italy), p.185.
52 Nicholson: (*op. cit.*), p.443.
53 *Ibid.*
54 CAB 120/603 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. IV) T.1148/4 to Gen. Alexander.
55 Nicholson: (*op. cit.*), p.445.
56 CAB 44/141 (Jones: Central Italy), p.185–7.
57 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.61.
58 *Il Corpo Italiano di Liberazione, Aprile-Settembre 1944* (*Ministero della Difesa*, Rome, 1950).
59 R. Kay: *Italy*, Official History of New Zealand in Second World War, Vol. II (Wellington N.Z., 1967), p.11, p.589–91.
60 *Ibid.* p.49–50.
61 WO 170/304 (10 Corps G WD) May 44, s.173, 175.
CAB 44/141 (Jones: Central Italy), p.172.
62 Kay: *Italy*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.53–5.
63 *Ibid.* p.54–9.
64 *Ibid.* p.63–4.
65 *Ibid.* p.65–9.
66 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.48, 57–8.
67 *Ibid.* p.65.

Digitized by Google

68 *Ibid.* p.58–9.
69 *Ibid.* p.61–2.
70 Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.124–7.
71 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.72–4.
72 *Ibid.* p.77–8.
73 *Ibid.* p.80–1.
74 *Ibid.* p.61, 74.
75 *Ibid.* p.75, 78–9.
76 *Ibid.* p.79.
77 Kay: *Italy*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.76–9.
78 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.86.
79 Kay: *Italy*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.82.
80 CAB 106/420 (AFHQ: Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy, hereafter referred to as OBIDFI), p.120–122, 8 Army Op. Instr. 1422 of 22.5.44 and 1423 of 3.6.44.
81 CAB 106/419 (OBIDFI), p.85.
82 H. Williamson: *The Fourth Division* (London 1951), p.158. Joslen: *Orders of Battle*, Vol. I (*op. cit.*), p.158, 162, 176, 297.
83 CAB 106/644 (6 S.A. Armoured Division History), p.15–16 and Appx A.
84 *Ibid.* and Joslen: *Orders of Battle*, Vol. I (*op. cit.*), p.269.
85 Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy* (*op. cit.*), p.445–6.
86 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/5 (DFB: Factors which slowed 8 Army's Pursuit up the Liri Valley, May 1944).
87 WO 204/10414, s.39, p.2, Lt-Col. Lord Tweedsmuir: Report on the Factors which slowed up the Eighth Army's Advance in the Liri Valley.
88 *Ibid.* 37A, para 4.
89 CAB 106/419 (OBIDFI), p.86.
90 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.83–5.
91 CAB 44/141 (Jones: Central Italy), p.193–4.
92 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.88.
93 Nicholson: *The Canadians in Italy* (*op. cit.*), p.447–503.
CAB 106/641 (6 S.A. Armd. Div. History), p.17–19.
94 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.88.
95 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.118–9.
96 *Ibid.* p.119.
97 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.54–5.
98 CAB 106/478, p.120–3.
99 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.54.
100 CAB 106/478, p.123–5.
101 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.53–4.
102 *Ibid.* p.50.
103 *Ibid*, p.55–57.
104 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.135–6.
105 *Ibid*, p.121–2.
106 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.46, 55.
107 *Ibid.* p.62.

Digitized by Google

108 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.122.
109 *Ibid.* p.121–22.
110 *Ibid.* p.122, 135.
111 *Ibid.* p.16.
112 *Ibid.* p.144–5.
113 Omitted.
114 *Ibid.* p.126–7.
115 *Ibid.* p.127–30.
116 *Ibid.* p.130–133.
117 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.56–7, 62–4, 71–2.
118 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.142. Truscott: *Command Missions* (*op. cit.*), p.377.
119 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.57 fn (4), p.62–3.
120 *Ibid.* p.62–4.
121 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.142–3.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.75–6.
122 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.76–7.
123 CAB 106/478, p.193.
124 *Ibid.* p.144.
125 *Ibid.* p.144–5.
126 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.75.
127 CAB 106/478, p.144–5.
128 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.80–2.
129 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.151–2.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.80–1, 83.
130 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.66–7.
131 *Ibid.* p.81–2, 84–5.
132 CAB 106/478, p.192.
133 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.58, 69, 71, 74, 80, 84–5.
134 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.146–7.
Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.128. CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.80–5.
135 WO Map: GSGS No. 4164 (Ed. 1943) 1: 100,000.
136 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.83–4.
137 CAB 106/478, p.153.
138 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.67.
139 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers) MA 1319 to CIGS.
140 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.84–5.
141 *Ibid.* p.60, 73, 85.
142 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.147–8.
143 Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.128–130.
144 CAB 106/478, p.153–4.
145 CAB 106/422 (OBIDFI), p.7–9. CAB 106/312 (Awards of V.C.) 3.6.44.
146 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.86–7.
147 *Ibid.* p.87–8.
148 WO 204/10402.
149 WO 163/569.

Digitized by Google

150 WO 214/33 Vol. I (Alexander Papers) s.36 MA 1364 to CIGS.
151 *Ibid.* s.33, O 2909 7.6.44.
152 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.162, and Le Goyet, p.128–132.
153 CAB 106/422 (OBIDFI), p.7–9.
154 CAB 106/478, p.158–162.
155 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.89.
156 CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.196, 5 Army Op. Instr. 27 4.6.44., and Le Goyet, p.129.
157 CAB 120/603 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. IV.) MEDCOS 124.
Gen. Mark W. Clark: *Calculated Risk* (Harper & Brothers, New York 1950), p.352, 361.
158 *Calculated Risk* (*op. cit.*), p.66.
159 CAB 120/603 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. IV) 7.6.44.
160 *Ibid.* T.1204/4 Marshal Stalin to PM, T.1214A/4 Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek to PM.
161 *Ibid.* PM to Gen. Wilson No. 3018, 9.4.44.
162 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers) MA 1337.
163 *Ibid.* MA 1322.
164 WO 204/10393 (AG Stats WO: Italy) S/578/44 of 9.6.44., amended by Casualties for US Forces in CAB 106/478 (Fifth Army History), p.209.
165 CAB 120/603 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. IV) M 565/4 and M 688/4, PM to DMI 20.5.44 and 5.6.44.
166 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.65 fn (1).
167 *Ibid.* and WO 170/203 (8 Army GSI WD) June, p.477 and 480, Appx B to 8 Army I Summary No. 745.
168 WO 170/160 (8 Army G Ops Main WD) May, Appx M and WO 170/167 June, Appx N.
169 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.68.
170 *Ibid.*
171 WO 204/10388 (AFHQ G3 Plans 20), s.61 ACMF Apprec. 1, p.2.
172 CAB AL 3000/F/EDS/V (EDS Comments of 17.7.73).
173 WO 204/10402.
174 CAB EDS 16, Ch. 1, p.57.
175 Lt-Col. S. Derry: *The Rome Escape Line* (1960), p.217, 222.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.70.
176 WO 204/10376 (AFHQ: Planning and Operations) F.5881, 13.6.44.
177 CAB 120/602 (PM/412/34/14 Vol. III) T.284/4.
178 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers) MA 1319.
179 *Ibid.* MA 1322.
180 CAB 44/168 (Army Narrative by Brig. W. P. Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects and Operational Maintenance of the Campaign in Italy), p.68.
181 WO 204/10414, s.39, p.39 and Appx 5, Report by Lt-Col. Lord Tweedsmuir on the Factors which slowed up Eighth Army's Advance in the Liri Valley.
182 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers) MA 1319 to CIGS.
183 O. Warner: *With Wolfe to Quebec* (London 1972), p.144.

Digitized by Google

184 Le Goyet: *La Participation Française à la Campagne d'Italie* (*op. cit.*), p.55.
185 *Ibid.* p.55 fn 2.

Digitized by Google

VOLUME VI

CHAPTER VI

Allied Strategy for the Mediterranean Theatre after the Battle for Rome: the 'Anvil Debate' (October 1943 — July 1944)

1 *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V (HMSO 1973), p.574–5.
2 CAB 121/593 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1 Vol. 2) s.387c COSMED 43.
3 John Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (HMSO 1956), p.105–110.
4 Major L. F. Ellis: *Victory in the West*, Vol. I (HMSO 1962), Appx 1.
5 CAB 121/593 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1 Vol. 2) s.549 MEDCOS 73.
6 *Ibid.* s.555.
7 *Ibid.* s.586A FMD 177.
8 *Ibid.* s.579 COS(W) 1241.
9 *Ibid.* s.596 JSM 1613.
10 *Ibid.* s.609 COS(W) 1258.
11 *Ibid.* s.616 JSM 1620.
12 *Ibid.* s.630 JSM 1626.
13 *Ibid.* s.638 JSM 1629.
14 *Ibid.* s.641 FMD 187.
15 *Ibid.* s.630 JSM 1626 7.4.44.
16 *Ibid.* s.619 D 109/4.
17 *Ibid.* s.650c D 115/4.
18 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.257–8.
19 COS(44) 128th Mtg(o) and COSMED 90.
20 WO 214/33 (Alexander Papers) s.7. ISPS/4 12.5.44.
21 *Ibid.* s.10 FMD 110.
22 *Ibid.*
23 Field-Marshal H. M. Wilson: *Eight Years Overseas* (London 1948), p.198.
WO 204/89 SAC(44) 35th Mtg 21.4.44 and 38th Mtg 29.4.44.
24 CAB 121/594 (SIC/F/Italy/6/1 Vol.3) s.688 MEDCOS 100; s.702 MEDCOS 101.
25 *Ibid.* MEDCOS 100.
26 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.259–63.
27 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1) s.25, 26B, 38, 41, and SAC(44) 42nd Mtg 9.5.44. in WO 204/89.
28 Winston S. Churchill: *The Second World War*, Vol. VI (London 1954), p.230.

Digitized by Google

29 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.263.
30 CAB 121/396 s.45 JSM 44 of 9.5.44 and s.63 JSM 77 of 31.5.44.
31 *Ibid.* s.54 MEDCOS 110.
32 *Ibid.* s.62 COS(W) 85.
33 WO 214/27 (Alexander Papers) F 49066.
34 *Ibid.* F 55276.
35 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. I) s.73 MEDCOS 125.
36 *Ibid.* s.64 COS(44) 178th Mtg(O).
37 *Ibid.* s.65 D183/4.
38 *Ibid.* s.70 COS 979/4.
39 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers) MA 1307.
40 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1) s.73 MEDCOS 125.
41 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers), MA 1364.
41*a* CAB 44/168, p.107, 124.
42 WO 214/15 Special unnumbered tel. 8.6.44.
43 *Ibid.* Special unnumbered tel. 28.8.44.
44 *Ibid.* MA 1370.
45 *Ibid.* Personal tel. CIGS to Alexander.
46 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. I) s.81A and B CCS 163rd Mtg (London) 11.6.44.; s.83 Note by Gen. Ismay 12.6.44.; s.89A and B CCS 164th Mtg (London) 13.6.44.
47 *Ibid.* s.89B Full record of CCS meeting, London, 1130 hrs 13.6.44.
48 *Ibid.* s.91 No. 3116 14.6.44.
49 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.343–4.
50 Ellis: *Victory in the West*, Vol. I (*op. cit.*), p.239, 272, 274.
51 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1), p.90B.
52 Arthur Bryant: *Triumph in the West* (London 1959), p.223.
53 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1) s.89B CCS 164th Mtg (London) 13.6.44.
54 WO 214/33 (Alexander Papers) s.42 SAC(44) 53rd Mtg and Addendum to Minutes.
55 *Ibid.* s.40 B 12936 16.6.44.
56 WO 214/27 (Alexander Papers) S 53967.
57 WO 214/33 (Alexander Papers) File 11, Pt. 1, s.44 SAC(44) 54th Mtg 1445 hrs 17.6.44.; s.45 SAC(44) (Special) 2 1800 hrs 17.6.44.
58 *Ibid.* s.44.
59 *Ibid.* s.43 CGS AAI: Strategical and Tactical Appreciations for Conf. 17 June.
60 *Ibid.* s.44.
61 *Ibid.* s.45.
62 *Ibid.* s.46 SAC(44) (Special) 3.
63 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1) s.101 B 12995 19.6.44.
64 *Ibid.* s.100 T.1322/4.
65 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers) MA 1449 23 June.
66 Harold Macmillan: *Blast of War* (London 1967), p.503–6.
67 WO 214/15 (Alexander Papers) Personal unnumbered tel.
68 *Ibid.* No. 56131.
69 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. I) s.113 SCAF 53.
70 *Ibid.* s.118 JSM 111.

Digitized by Google

71 *Ibid.* s.123 COS(44) 571(O).
72 WO 214/33 (Alexander Papers) File 11, Pt. 1, s.43 CGS AAI Strategical and Tactical Appreciations.
73 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1), COS(44) 571(O), p.5.
74 *Ibid.* s.144 COS(44) 571(O) (Revise) 28.6.44.
75 Bryant: *Triumph in the West* (*op. cit.*), p.223.
76 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1) s.125. T.1355/4.
77 *Ibid.* s.130 and 131 COS(44) 210th Mtg(O) and COS(W) 130.
78 *Ibid.* s.142A LETOD/50 Private, Redman to Hollis.
79 *Ibid.* s.140 JSM 114 27.6.44.
80 *Ibid.* s.143B T.1375/4.
81 *Ibid.* s.147 COS(W) 135 28.6.44 and: *Triumph in the West*, p.224.
82 *Ibid.* s.155 JSM 118 29.6.44.
83 *Ibid.* s.148 T.1377/4.
84 *Ibid.* s.155 JSM 118 29.6.44.
85 *Ibid.* s.156 T.1384/4 29.6.44.
86 *Ibid.* s.155 JSM 118, s.157D Record of CCS Mtg of 26.6.44.
87 CAB 106/1044 SACMED Despatch: *The Operations in Southern France* (HMSO 1944), p.13.
88 Gen. Mark Clark: *Calculated Risk* (Harper & Bros. New York 1950), p.368.
89 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 5, p.40.
90 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1) s.161 and 160A COS (44) 217th Mtg(O) and COS 1102/4.
91 *Ibid.* s.161 COS(44) 217th Mtg(O).
92 *Ibid.* s.166 T.1392/4.
93 *Ibid.* s.167 T.1399/4.
94 *Ibid.* s.170 COSMED 139.
95 *Ibid.* s.181 MEDCOS 154.
96 *Ibid.* s.177A and B.
97 *Ibid.* s.182 5.7.44.
98 *Ibid.* s.187 COS(44) 225th Mtg(O).
99 *Ibid.* s.195A D.218/4.
100 *Ibid.* s.198 COS(44) 227th Mtg(O).
101 *Ibid.* s.211 COS(44) 229th Mtg(O).
102 *Ibid.* s.192 FWD 12358 Eisenhower to Wilson; s.190 F.69283 Wilson to Eisenhower 6.7.44.
103 *Ibid.* s.199 MEDCOS 159 of 8.7.44. Despatch by Field-Marshal Lord Alexander: *The Allied Armies in Italy 3.9.43. to 12.12.44.* (Supplement to The London Gazette 6.6.50.), p.2936. WO 214/27 (Alexander Papers) FX 68641 SACMED Directive of 5.7.44.
104 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. 1) s.220A COS(W) 166 12.7.44.; s.226. JSM 142 19.7.44.; s.244A JSM 163 28.7.44.
105 *Ibid.* s.250 LETOD 227 29.7.44.
106 *Ibid.* s.220A.
107 *Ibid.* s.230 CCS 603/11.
108 *Ibid.* s.246 COSMED 161.
109 *Ibid.* s.167 T.1399/4.

Digitized by Google

110 Field-Marshal Lord Alexander: *Memoirs 1940–1945* (London 1962), p.139.
111 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 3, p.11.
112 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V. (*op. cit.*), p.343–5.
113 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 5, p.28–9.
114 *Ibid.* p.31.
115 *Ibid.* p.25.
116 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 3, p.10.
117 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 5, p.26.
118 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 3, p.11.
119 CAB EDS 19, Ch. 1, p.12.
120 EDS paper based on CAB HIST AL 1669, AL 1719 and AL 394.
121 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 5, p.2.
122 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 1, p.3.
123 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 1, p.5. CAB 44/143 (Army Narrative by Major F. Jones: Central Italy April 1944–August 1944), p.286–7, 449.
124 CAB EDS 18, Ch.5, p.47–8.
125 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 1, p.12–15.
126 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.342, 525.
127 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 3, p.2.
128 *Ibid.* p.6–7.
129 Captain S. W. Roskill: *The War at Sea* Vol. III Pt II (HMSO 1961), p.91. ADM B.R. 1736(36) Battle Summary No. 43 (Invasion of the South of France), p.5–7.
130 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 3, p.4, 6–7.
131 *Ibid.* p.5.
132 *Ibid.* p.3.
133 Lt-Col. H. F. Joslen: *Orders of Battle, Second World War*, Vol. I (HMSO 1960), p.29, 92.
134 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 3, p.9.
135 CAB EDS 19, Ch. 5, p.7–8.
136 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 5, p.3–5.
137 *Ibid.* p.9.
138 *Ibid.* p.11.
139 *Ibid.* p.7–8.
140 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 3, p.34–6. CAB EDS 19, Ch. 2, p.46.
141 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 5, p.6.

Digitized by Google

VOLUME VI

CHAPTER VII

The War at Sea (April to June 1944): and a Glance at Yugoslavia

1 ADM WH 8923, 8926, 8927.
AHB Air Narrative: RAF in Maritime War, Vol. VII, Pts 1 and 2.
ADM CB 3306(2) Naval Staff History Second World War: *Submarines*. Vol. II, Operations in the Mediterranean.
CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4 (Air Contribution by Gp Capt. Gleave).
2 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, Section (v).
3 *Ibid.* Appx M.
4 Captain S. W. Roskill R.N.: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt I (H.M.S.O. 1960), p.324–5.
5 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4 Appx G.
6 *Ibid.* p.9–10.
7 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt I (*op. cit.*), p.321–2. Pt II (H.M.S.O. 1961), p.454.
8 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 2, p.35.
9 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt I (*op. cit.*), p.318–22.
10 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.42, 44–5. Ch. 2, p.10, Ch. 3, p.26–7.
CAB EDS 18, Ch. 1, p.8, 12–14.
11 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt II (*op. cit.*), p.452.
12 AIR 24/479A (AHQ Eastern Mediterranean ORB). AHB Air Narrative: RAF in Maritime War, Vol. VII, Pt II, Mediterranean 1944–1945.
13 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, Appx B.
14 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt II (*op. cit.*), p.452–3.
15 *Ibid.* Appx XX.
J. C. Taylor: *German Warships* World War II (1969), p.61–63.
16 Roskill Vol. III, Pt II *op. cit.*, Appx XX.
17 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, p.1 and Appx D.
18 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt II (*op. cit.*), p.453.
19 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, Appx D.
20 *Ibid.* Appx N.
21 *Ibid.*
22 *Ibid.* Appx H.
23 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt I (*op. cit.*), p.145.

Digitized by Google

24 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, Appx F.
25 *Ibid.* Appx D.
26 *Ibid.* Appx F.
27 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.27–9.
28 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt II (*op. cit.*), p.459.
29 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.28–9.
30 CAB EDS 16, Ch. 5, p.34–5.
31 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.19.
32 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, Appx J.
33 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.34–6, Ch. 3, p.4 and 19.
34 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. I (HMSO 1954), p.326–7.
35 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, Appx J.
36 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 1, p.37–8.
37 *Ibid.* Ch. 3, p.19–20.
38 *Ibid.* Ch. 1, p.36.
39 *Ibid.* Ch. 3, p.20.
40 ADM *Submarines*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.184.
41 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt I (*op. cit.*), p.313.
ADM WH 8926, 8927.
ADM *Submarines*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.195–6.
42 ADM *Submarines*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.196–7.
43 *Ibid.* p.199–202.
44 ADM *Submarines*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.183.
Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt I (*op. cit.*), p.191 and Vol. III, Pt II (*op. cit.*), p.84–5.
45 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt I (*op. cit.*), p.191.
46 *Ibid.* p.318.
47 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.14.
48 *Ibid.* Ch. 1, p.29–30.
49 *Ibid.* Ch. 3, p.15.
50 *Ibid.* p.14.
51 *Ibid.* p.16.
52 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 1, p.4.
53 CAB EDS 15, Ch. 2, p.37–9.
54 CAB EDS 16, Ch. 5, p.33–5.
55 CAB EDS 18, Ch. 3, p.13.
56 ADM *Submarines*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.185–6.
57 *Ibid.* p.232.
58 *Ibid.* p.231–3.
59 *Ibid.* p.235.
60 *Ibid.* p.234–5.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.28.
61 ADM *Submarines*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.235.
62 *Ibid.* p.230, 236.
63 *Ibid.* p.237–8.
64 ADM WH 7722 'Sunbeam'.
65 ADM *Submarines*, Vol. II (*op. cit.*), p.246–7.
66 ADM Case 7243 4150/Med/00296/1.
67 D. Pope: *Flag 4* (London 1954), p.33.

Digitized by Google

L. C. Reynolds: *Gunboat 658* (London 1955), p.97.
68 John Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (HMSO 1956), p.82.
69 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/20 (comment by Major-Gen. T. B. L. Churchill).
70 Pope: *Flag 4* (*op. cit.*), p.174.
71 ADM Case 7243 M/06881/44, M/09028/44, M/09143/44.
72 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt I (*op. cit.*), p.371–2 and Vol. III, Pt II (*op. cit.*), p.107.
73 CAB EDS 17 and 18, Air Raid Tables.
74 WO 204/10392 (AFHQ History of Special Operations) S.I, p.2 and Annex A: and S.II, Annex A.
75 *Ibid.* S.I, p.1.
76 WO Basic Handbook: *Jugoslavia*, p.2. (AFHQ 2706).
77 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. II (HMSO 1956), p.241.
78 CAB 121/196 (SIC/B/Command/8 Vol. I) s.150 CCS 387/3 5.12.43.
79 WO 204/10392 (AFHQ History of Special Operations) S.VIII, p.2 and Annex B.
80 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.274–5.
WO 216/165 (D.O. Correspondence, GAMMELL).
WO 204/10392 S.VIII and Annex C, COSMED 48.
81 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/3, p.1–2. (DFB: The Gestation of Balkan Air Force Command, June 1944).
82 WO 204/10392 S.VIII and Annex D (AFHQ to Command F.266 20.3.44), Annex E (AFHQ to SOMTO 17.4.44).
83 WO 204/1851 s.105 and 107.
84 CAB 101/227 (DFB: Allied Forces and the Italian Resistance), p.11 *et seq.*
AHB: RAF Narrative, Special Duty Operations in Europe, p.27, 42.
85 WO 216/165 s.27A 7.5.44.
86 *Ibid.* s.27A.
87 CAB 101/227, p.11 and 11B.
88 WO 216/165 (D.O. Letters) COS AFHQ to ACIGS (O) WO, p.13A.
89 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4 (Air Contribution by Gp Capt. Gleave), p.12.
Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.273–4.
WO 204/10392 S.VIII p.2.
90 Pope: *Flag 4* (*op. cit.*), p.161.
91 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.273.
92 WO 218/61 2 SS Bde WD.
93 Lt-Col. H. F. Joslen: *Orders of Battle*, Vol. II (HMSO 1960), p.455.
WO 204/10429 (AFHQ 6863 A Report on Operations by Commander Land Forces Adriatic, Brigadier G. M. O. Davy), p.3.
94 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V (HMSO 1973), p.830–1.
WO 204/10429, p.4.
95 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V, p.572.
96 CAB 121/396 (SIC/D/France/6/14 Vol. I) s.123.

Digitized by Google

COS (44) 571 (O).
97 Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.270–2.
98 *Ibid.*
99 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.21–2.
100 *Ibid.* p.26.
101 *Ibid.* p.22–4.
102 *Ibid.* p.23–4.
WO 204/10392 S.VIII, Appx H.
103 AHB: SOE (Air) in the Mediterranean, Appx C.
104 Roskill: *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt II (*op. cit.*), p.82.
Ehrman: *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (*op. cit.*), p.276–7.
Fitzroy Maclean: *Eastern Approaches* (London 1949), p.451–4.
105 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3, p.30–1.
106 WO 204/10429 (Comd LFA Rept), p.4.
107 *Ibid.* p.4–5.
CAB 44/153 (History of the Commandos in the Mediterranean), p.209–31.
CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.25–6.
108 WO 204/1566 (HQ LFA), p.118–129.
CAB 44/153, p.209–31.
109 WO 204/1566, p.120 and 129.
110 Following account based on:
WO 204/1566 s.119. Report by 2 SS Bde on Op. 'Flounced'.
CAB 44/153 History of the Commandos, p.209–232 and Appx Q: Sketch Map of Brac.
111 CAB 44/153, p.224.
112 WO 204/1566, p.121.
113 CAB 44/153, p.233.
114 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/3, p.30–1.
115 CAB EDS 17, Ch. 3, p.15 & 25.
116 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/3 (DFB: Gestation of BAF Command), p.2.
117 WO 204/89 SAC(44) 37th and 38th Mtgs, 27 and 29.4.44.
118 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, p.12.
119 CAB 121/528 (SIC/F/Balkans/1) s.42 and 45.
COS(44) 143rd and 147th Mtgs (O).
120 *Ibid.* s.48 MEDCOS 121.
121 *Ibid.* s.49. COS(44) 166th Mtg (O).
122 *Ibid.* s.57.
123 *Ibid.* s.48, 65, 71 and 76.
124 *Ibid.* s.71. COS(44) 493(O).
125 *Ibid.* s.81. COSMED 129.
126 *Ibid.* s.58. Private tel. Wilson to CIGS.
127 *Ibid.* s.59, 60A and 62.
128 CAB 121/528 s.97 COS(44) 552(O) and WO 204/10430 (Comd LFA Rept), Appx 1. Directive dated 15.6.44.
129 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/4, p.13.
130 WO 204/10429 (Comd LFA Rept), p.6–7.
131 WO 204/10430, p.5, Appx 2.
132 *Ibid.* p.1, Appx 1.

Digitized by Google

133 WO 204/10392 S.VIII, Annex I.
134 AHB MAAF ORB (IIM/A36/2M).
Med/ME OBs (11/14/27 (c).
Group, Wing and Squadron ORBs.
135 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/9 Air Contribution Sec. (vii), p.13.
136 AHB MAAF ORB (IIM/A36/2M).
Med/ME OBs (11/14/27 (c).
Group, Wing and Squadron ORBs.
137 AHB 23/1508, p.84.
138 AIR 23/166–7, (SO Monthly Returns), Repts 2–7.
139 WO 204/10430, p.7, Appx 3. LFA OB 15.6.44.
140 CAB 101/228, p.129.

Digitized by Google

VOLUME VI

CHAPTER VIII

British Administration in Italy from the Fall of Rome to the First Battles of the Gothic Line (June 1944 — September 1944)

1 WO 170/6 (AFHQ Q Maint WD) Jan 1944.
2 CAB 106/549 (DST AFHQ: History of the RASC Services in the Italy Campaign), p.88, 90.
3 WO 170/85 (AAI Q WD) AAI Weekly Admin Bulletin No 9 17.6.44.
4 WO 170/8 (AFHQ Q Maint WD) Oct 1944.
5 CAB 106/549 (*op. cit.*), p.87. CAB 106/678, p.384, *et seq.* (History of REME in BNAF & CMF) and Institution of the RASC: *Story of the Royal Army Service Corps 1939–1945* (1955), p.264.
6 WO 204/486 (AFHQ Draft History) Chapter 36.
7 CAB 44/169 (Brigadier W. P. Pessell: The Campaign in the Northern Apennines: Principal Administrative Aspects and Operational Maintenance of the Campaign in Italy), p.1–8 & Appx 4.
8 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects and Operational Maintenance of the Campaign in Italy), p.114–6 & p.121.
WO 170/86 (AAI Q WD) July D.4A Army Admin. Instr. 43.
9 WO 204/486 (AFHQ Draft History), Chapter 36.
10 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects) (*op. cit.*), p.108.
11 WO 170/86 (AAI Q WD) July 44 A.2 and WO 170/87 Nov 44.
12 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects) (*op. cit.*), p.72–8.
13 CAB 106/426 (AFHQ: Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy, hereafter referred to as OBILFI), Appx R.
14 History of AFHQ: WO 204/475 Pt 1, p.87–88.
WO 204/478, Pt 2, Sec 3, p.444–6.
WO 204/482, Pt 3, Sec 3, p.941–6.
15 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services in the Italy Campaign), p.79.
16 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects), p.149.
17 CAB 106/549, p.225, 229, 265.

Digitized by Google

18 *Ibid.* p.96.
19 WO 170/86 (AAI Q WD) July, Appx A.20, D.4A.
20 CAB 106/426 (OBIDFI), Appx U.
21 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.96 *et seq.*
22 WO 170/6 & 7 (AFHQ Q Maint WD), Jan–July 1944.
23 Major J. E. Higham RE and E. A. Knighton: *Movements* (WO 1955), p.3.
24 Brigadier R. Micklem: *Transportation* (WO 1950), p.117.
25 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects), p.10.
26 *Ibid.* p.117–120.
27 Micklem: *Transportation*, p.120–1.
Higham and Knighton: *Movements*, p.354–5.
28 CAB 44/168 (Pessell), p.107–110, 124. Micklem: *Transportation*, p.119.
Higham and Knighton: *Movements*, p.363.
29 WO 204/10388 s.61 Note by Log Plans on ACMF Apprec. 1.
30 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects), p.119, 124, 126. Higham and Knighton: *Movements*, p.63–4. Micklem: *Transportation*, p.19–20.
31 CAB 44/168 (Pessell), p.119, 124, 126.
Micklem: *Transportation*, p.119–20.
CAB 106/426 (OBIDFI).
32 CAB 106/426 (OBIDFI).
33 Higham and Knighton: *Movements*, p.355.
34 *Ibid.* p.361.
35 Micklem: *Transportation*, p.120–1.
36 CAB 44/168 (Pessell), p.87.
37 CAB 106/552, p.81 (History of RASC Services), Appx 29.
38 CAB 44/143 (Major F. Jones: Central Italy April–August 1944), p.469, 478, 483.
39 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.175.
40 *Ibid.* p.91.
41 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. IV, p.99–101.
42 *Ibid.* Vol. V, p.137.
43 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.175.
44 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects), p.27, 130–1.
45 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.177.
46 *Ibid.* p.178–9 and CAB 106/552, Appx 29, Pt I, p.7–9.
47 CAB 44/168, p.89–90.
48 CAB 106/549, p.186–7 and CAB 106/552, Appx 29, p.24–7.
49 CAB 106/549, p.186 and CAB 106/552, Appx 29, p.17–23.
50 CAB 106/549, p.186 and CAB 106/552, Appx 29, p.23.
51 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/10 (DFB: 8 Army Administration June 1944; supply by Road and Rail).
52 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.101.
53 CAB 44/168 (Pessell), p.40–41.
54 *Ibid*, p.98, 135.
55 *Ibid*, p.100–103, 128–130.
56 *Ibid*, p.98–9, 101–2.

Digitized by Google

57 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/10 *op. cit.*
CAB 44/168, p.68 and WO: Field Service Pocket Book, Pamphlet No. 6, 1939: Mechanized Movement by Road.
58 CAB 44/168, p.128–9.
59 *Ibid.* p.102–3.
60 *Ibid.* p.99, 103.
61 *Ibid.* p.105–7.
62 CAB 44/143 (Jones: Central Italy *op. cit.*), p.450–2.
63 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects), p.137.
64 WO 170/6 (AFHQ Q Maint WD) May 1944, Appx 30.
65 WO 204/10388 s.61. ACMF Apprec. No. 1 of 22.2.44.
66 Col. H. W. Wilson: *Administrative Planning* (*WO 1952*), p.181–2.
CAB HIST AL/3000/E/3 FLR: Maintenance in Italy.
67 WO 170/7 (AFHQ Maint WD) August 1944, Appx 6.
68 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC), p.101.
69 CAB 44/169 (Pessell: Campaign in the North Apennines), p.8–10.
70 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. V, p.250.
71 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.266.
72 WO 170/8 (AFHQ Q Maint WD) Oct '44, Appx 29.
73 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.267–8 and CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects), p.136.
74 WO 204/482 Hist of AFHQ, Pt 3, p.909.
75 CAB 106/455 (OBIDFI) Administrative Monograph 24, p.2.
76 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.267–8.
77 CAB 106/455 (OBIDFI) Administrative Monograph 24, p.4.
78 CAB 106/549, Appx 24, p.266.
79 CAB 44/168, p.136.
80 *Ibid*, p.8.
81 CAB 106/575 MG RE CMF, 9.12.1945: Engineers in the Italian Campaign, p.82.
82 CAB 106/479 Fifth Army History, Vol. VI (Lt-Col. Chester G. Starr, Italy), p.115.
CAB 44/168, p.8.
83 CAB 44/168, p.120.
84 CAB 106/479, p.115.
85 CAB 44/169, p.106–7.
86 CAB 106/575 (Engineers in the Italian Campaign), p.81.
CAB 106/479 (Fifth Army History), p.115.
87 CAB 106/575, p.81.
CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects), p.150.
88 CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.273–4.
89 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. IV, p.217 and
CAB 106/549, p.284.
90 CAB 106/549, p.285–6.
91 CAB 106/551 (History of RASC Services), Appx 22, p.29.
CAB 44/168, p.120.
92 CAB 44/169 (Pessell: Campaign in the Northern Apennines), p.28.
93 CAB 44/168 (Pessell: Principal Administrative Aspects), p.120,

Digitized by Google

128–9 and CAB 106/549, p.276–80.

94 *Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. IV, p.101.
CAB 106/549 (History of RASC Services), p.268–9.

95 CAB 106/549, p.270–1.

96 CAB 44/169 (Pessell: The Campaign in the Northern Apennines), p.109–112.

97 CAB 106/440 (OBIDFI), p.21.
CAB 106/417 (OBIDFI), Appx QQ (Gen. Wilson to C-in-C AAI, 5.3.44.).

98 Omitted.

99 WO 204/547 (Arms and Ammunition Allocation and Expenditure) s.46, Appx O, to A/COS G3 AFHQ Memo of 11 Jan 45 at s.61.

100 Brigadier A. L. Pemberton: *The Development of Artillery Tactics and Equipment* (WO 1950), p.177.

101 CAB 106/417 (OBIDFI) Appx SS HQ AAI 26/2 G (Ops), March 44.

102 CAB 106/440 (OBIDFI), p.21–2.

103 WO 204/547, Appx O to A/COS G3 AFHQ of 11 Jan 45, at s.61.

104 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1 (DFB: The Reinforcement Problem March 1944–May 1945).
WO AFHQ 6881E/1 53A and 55A of 18 and 23.5.44.

105 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1, WO AFHQ 6881A/6 I 116A 78961 SD2a 18 March 1944.

106 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1, WO AFHQ 6881D/1 35A Gen. Wilson to WO 18.4.44., 40A and 125C.

107 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1, WO AFHQ 6881D/1 40A and 42A and WO AFHQ 6881D/2 68B AAI Admin. Instr. 19 of 6.5.44; 75A.

108 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1, WO AFHQ 6881A/5, 57B.

109 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1, WO AFHQ 6881D/1 I 40A, 125C. WO AFHQ 6881A/4 83A and AFHQ 6881D/2, 67A, 75A.

110 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1, WO AFHQ 6229 II s.74, Appx by AFHQ Stats of 18.5.44.
CAB 101/229 Pt III s.13, p.2.

111 CAB 106/377 Gen. Sir Bernard Paget: Middle East Review 1944, p.10.

112 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/1, p.4.

113 *Ibid.* p.6.

114 Institution of the RASC: *Story of the Royal Army Service Corps 1939–1945* (1955) and CAB 106/549–552 (DST AFHQ: History of the RASC Services in the Italy Campaign).

115 CAB 106/552, Appx 32.

116 CAB 106/549, p.104, 166 *et seq* and 106/550, Appx 9.

117 CAB 106/549, p.105 *et seq.*

118 CAB 106/707 (Despatch by FM Lord Alexander: *Allied Armies in Italy 3.9.43 to 12.12.44*, London Gazette 12.6.50), p.2960.

119 CAB 106/550, Appx 9.

120 *Story of the Royal Army Service Corps, op. cit.*, p.282.

121 *Ibid.* p.472–4.

122 CAB 106/549, p.169.

Digitized by Google

CAB 101/224 (D. F. Butler: The British soldier in Italy 1943–44).
123 CAB 106/550, Appx 9, p.10–11.
124 CAB 106/549, p.165.
125 CAB 106/549, p.154/6.
126 CAB 106/550, Appx 9, p.20–1.
127 WO 170/6 AFHQ/3310/Q Maint 5.5.44.
128 CAB 106/549, p.150.
129 CAB 106/550, Appx 9, p.21–2.
130 Major-General Sir E. Bertram Rowcroft: *Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers* (WO 1951), Vol. I, p.128 and 134.
CAB 106/677: History of REME in BNAF and CMF, p.197, 390 and 413.
131 WO 170/167 June 1944, Appx M.
WO 170/4180 April, Appx M (8 Army Main WD).
132 Rowcroft: *Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers*, Vol. I, p.129.
133 *Ibid.* p.130 and CAB 106/678: History of REME in BNAF and CMF, Ch. 26.
134 Rowcroft: Vol.1, p.131.
CAB 106/678, p.313–6.
135 Rowcroft: Vol. 1, p.128.
CAB 106/678, Ch. 28.
136 Rowcroft: Vol. 1, p.128.
CAB 106/677 & 678, Chs. 19, 32 & 35.
137 Rowcroft: Vol. II, p.83.
138 CAB 106/678, p.375–80.
139 Rowcroft: Vol. II, p.80–1.
140 CAB 106/678, p.394.
141 CAB 106/681, p.806.
142 CAB HIST AL 3000/F/Air/8 (Air Contribution by Gp Capt. Gleave), p.44.
143 AIR 24/963 (HQ MAAF ORB Organization Appx) July 1944 C/Org/66.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

INDEX

In this Index subjects are entered where possible in their alphabetical places, in preference to large composite headings. Inter-Service and Theatre commands are indexed by title. Army Commands and Forces are grouped by branch, formation and unit under their respective nationalities, Naval and Air units under Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and other national equivalents; for the German Air Force, see under Luftwaffe. For code-named Army operations, see Appendix 2 and individual entries; for Naval and Air operations, see sub-heads. German Defence Lines are in their alphabetical places, also localities and features of whatever country, and ships of whatever nationality. The Administration heading covers organization, technical terms, and units; supplies and services are indexed by name.

Adams, Lieut.-Colonel F. D.; comd Adams Force, 200 and n, 244

Administration, general: organization and activities, spring '44, 23-33; contribution to 'Diadem', 292; and to advance to Pisa-Rimini Line, 313; main tasks and problems June-Sept. '44, 410-14; specific functions, 415-58 (Ch. VIII); tribute, 459

Administrative Headquarters and Formations: *see also* A.A.I., A.F.H.Q., and 8th Army
- British Areas and Districts, 23, 31, 416-8
- Divisional Maintenance Areas, 28, 433, 436, 443
- Field Maintenance Centres and Areas, 28, 433-4 and n, 435, 443
- Mediterranean Air Transport Service, 28
- Mediterranean Shipping Board, 419
- Military Railway Service, 423-5
- Peninsula Base Section, 32-3
- Rome Area Allied Command, 417
- Royal Air Force, air transport organization, 27-8; and Air Ammunition Parks, 443
- Transportation and Movement Directorates, 418-9
- U.S. Army, administrative chain of command, 23
- U.S. Army Air Force, admin, organization, 15, 28

Administrative Terms:
- 'A' and 'B' vehicles, 454 and n
- 'General', 'Local' and 'Military' administration, 413 and n
- Divisional Slice, 437n
- Equivalent Division, 437 and n
- General Staff Reserve, Mediterranean Theatre, 437 and n, 438
- Lines of Communication, Zone, 413-8; and general characteristics, 418
- Maintenance, short and long-term, 24, 28, 421-2; and in Royal Air Force, 458
- Operational Zone, 413, 438, 444
- 'Service', 410n
- Shore-to-shore lift, 308 and n
- Transport, First, Second, and Third Lines of: organization for 'Diadem', 26, 32; classification and allotment, 430, 433-5, 443
- Working margin, 437n, 438

Administrative Units:
Royal Army Service Corps:
- Beach Groups, 433
- General Transport Companies: allocations for 'Diadem', 26, 32; for advance to Arno, 420n, 430, 435; functions, 426, 429, 433
- Jeep-and-trailer platoons, 26, 88, 430-1
- Pack Transport Companies, 27n, 88
- Petrol Units, 440n, 443
- Tank Transporter Companies, 431
- Tipper Companies, 431-2
- Water Transport and Motor Boat Companies, 420 and n

Royal Engineers:
- Field companies on road repair, 432
- Oil Storage and Pipeline Units, 441 and n
- Railway Engineers, 425

See also Indian *and* South African Engineers, R.A.O.C. and R.E.M.E.

Adriatic coastline: Allies dispute strategic targets, 316, 318-20, 321-30; German views on Allied intentions, 341-3; OKW re-defines policies for, 343

Adriatic islands, indexed by name. Ports and Waters, *see* Naval *and* Air Operations, Balkan Air Force and S.O.E.

Aegean sea and islands: Allied air and naval functions, 366, 377-8; German views of Allied intentions, 378-80; and problems of islands' supply, 380-1. *See also* Naval *and* Air Operations, and Map 13

Air Attacks, Allied: on aircraft factories and airfields in Austria and Balkans, 33, 46, 213n, 395; on airfields in Italy, 44, 64-5, 158, 207; on bridges, roads and vehicles in Italy, 154-8, 204-9, 232; effects on German troop movements, 124-27n, 150-1, 172-5, 205-8, 259, 278n; German MT losses, 205-7, 232, 250; damage to German withdrawal routes, 208, 232, 239, 275; on marshalling-yards and other rail targets, in Balkans, 33, 45-6, 158, 214; in Italy, post-'Strangle', 156-61, 210-1; in southern France, 212 and n; on oil installations in Balkans, 45-6, 158, 213; in Italy, 215; on ports and shipping, 358-75; on radar stations, S. France, 366. *See also* Tables in Ch. I, III, IV and VII, 'Strangle', 'Point-blank', and Map 3

Digitized by Google

Air Attacks German: *see* Convoys *and* Luftwaffe
Aircraft, Allied: overall strength 12th May, 68; losses in 'Diadem', 153. Developments, *see* Rocket Projectiles
Aircraft, German: *see* Luftwaffe
Aircraft sorties, Allied: tables, following p. 53, 161, 217; totals 1st April-12th May '44, 33, 37, 40-1, 45 and n; 12th May-5th June '44, 153-4, 203, 360-2
Air reconnaissance, Allied: 68, 215, 292, 363-6
Air reconnaissance, German: 75, 340-1
Air support for 5th and 8th Armies: 38, 47, 64-7, 112, 155-61, 202-9; for Partisans, 214, 390-1 and n
Air supremacy, Allied: 150, 153, 215-7, 294
Air H.Q. Eastern Mediterranean: formation, 359n; functions, 366, 370
Ajax, H.M.S.: 358
Alatri: 254, 258-9
Alban hills: 221-3, 260, 268-71, 274, 279-81
Albania: 389, 390n
Alexander, General the Hon. Sir Harold: C.-in-C. Allied Armies in Italy, 1n; appreciation and outline plans for offensive, 22nd Feb. '44, 5-8; views on Rome, 9, 235; holds planning conferences, 10-12, 16-18, 20; visits Churchill 11th April, 19; method of Army Group planning, 21; deception plan, 22-3; reports to Wilson on artillery ammunition, and restricts, 29-30; issues Operation Order for 'Diadem' 5th May, 57-9; decisions affecting French Expeditionary Corps, 91, 149n, 252; reports to C.I.G.S. on progress of operations, extracts 12th May-4th June, 111, 126, 152, 229, 236, 283, 290; reports intentions to Churchill, 18th May, 163; visits Truscott, 5th May, 221; defers 6th U.S. Corps' attack, 228; regrouping orders, 26th May, 248; terrain problems noted, 277; shifts inter-Army boundary, 2nd June, 279; defines next areas of advance, 6th June, 282; his objectives for 6th U.S. Corps analysed, 288; his style of command, 290; hears of withdrawals from A.A.I. misgivings, 310-15; appreciation and plans for operations N. of Rome, 312-14; puts case for strike to Po valley, Ljubljana Gap, and Vienna, 319-20, 323; his objectives in Italy defined, 5th July, 336. Other refs, 95, 167, 305, 447
Allen, Brigadier-General F. W.: 228n
Allfrey, Lieut.-General C. W.: comd 5th Corps, 15
Allied Armies in Italy (A.A.I.): formerly A.C.M.F., 1n; issues regrouping orders 3rd March, 12; some holdings, 6th May, 25n; Operation Order for Spring offensive, 57-9; troop withdrawals for amphibious operations, 310; objectives, after 'Anvil' confirmed, 336; HQ moves to Rome, 413; administration in Operational Zone, and A.F.H.Q. requirement procedures, 416, 422. *See* Maps 2 and 18
Allied Control Commission: 307, 416
Allied Forces Headquarters (A.F.H.Q.): to plan capture of Elba, 58; divergent views on Theatre strategy, 306; directives for Balkan Air Force, Land Forces Adriatic, and No. 37 Military Mission, 403-6; moves from Algiers to Caserta, 413; general administration in Italy, 413-6, 437-8, 451; issues Admin. Memorandum no. 25, 421; ammunition shortage, 447; infantry reinforcements, 448-50
Altenstadt, Colonel von: Chief of Staff 14th Panzer Corps, 51; comments on infantry in hills, 152; other refs, 52-3, 112, 147, 239, 258
Alycon, French destroyer: 354
Ammunition: A.A.I. holdings, May '44, 25n; shortages, Med. Theatre and world-wide, 29-30, 444-7; amounts dumped, Italy, 32n, 79n, 88, 187n, 221; 5th Army tonnage, 64; expenditures, 30n, 445-7; tonnage from ports, 423; separate scale in Theatre Reserve, 437
Ancona: as Advanced Base for A.A.I. and 5th Corps, 33, 428; capture, 420; other refs 58, 156, 313, 419, 429
Anders, Lieut.-General W.: comd 2nd Polish Corps, 15; Mt Cassino operations, 86-88, 111, 131-3
Anti-aircraft: artillery, in support of 8th Army, 79n, 83n, 99, 187; of F.E.C., 89n; personnel, *see* Mediterranean A.A. Advisory Committee
Anti-tank guns, Allied: bridging loads, 77n; in 8th Army's plans and operations, 82, 87, 117, 122, 125n, 194, 199; in 6th U.S. Corps' barrage, 228
Anti-tank guns, German: AOK 10's defence criticised, 118; in action, 122, 148, 179, 230-1; strengths and losses, 118n, 124, 250n; and Hitler Line, 183
'Anvil': operation against southern France, 5; background Aug. '43-Feb. '44, 295-9; Anglo-U.S. C.O.S. views on landings, and future strategy for Italy, 300-332; plans to land in S. France, 309, 316, 321-5; Churchill-Roosevelt exchanges, 327-33; directive to Wilson 2nd July, 333; name changed to 'Dragoon' 1st Aug., 337; Anglo-American relations strained, 338; naval/land forces involved, 342n; start of 'Dragoon' 345-6; command arrangements, 337
Anzio: plans for 6th U.S. Corps offensive, 11, 18, 58, 221-2; conditions in beachhead, 220-1; German defences, 224-6. Other refs, 49, 146, 167, 357, 427. *See* Map 15
Aquino: in Hitler Line, 57, 182; attacked, 178-80; bombarded, 193. Other refs, 167, 194, 200-1
Arbuthnott, Brigadier, R. K.,: 120n
Arce: 181, 238; fight for, 242-3
Arezzo: 427-8
Armour, Allied: Gari crossings, 84, 109, 117-8; strengths, 107, 118, 186n, 285, 454-5; losses, 119, 199, 229, 272; limitations in Italy, 241; misjudgements in 'Diadem', 291-2; repair, recovery and overhaul, summer '44, 454-7. *For* Armoured Units, *see under respective nationalities*

Digitized by Google

Armour, German: transfers, 127, 141; Panther turrets in Hitler Line, 183; Kesselring's loss estimates, 250n, 285; replacements from OKW, 165, 285 *For* Units, *see under* German Army
Arnold, Lieut.-General H. H.: 315-6, 319-21, 328
Artemisio, Mt: capture and repercussions, 268-70
Artena: 222, 252, 263-5
Artillery, Allied: role, 29, 60, 446; 8th Army's guns, 12th May, 32n, 61n; 5th Army's, 64; Corps' guns and programmes, 79, 87, 89, 187; 'Diadem' bombardment, 99; superiority, some German comments, 140-2, 201, 250; strengths, May-June '44, 285; control and flexibility, 446-7
Attlee, Mr C. R.: 336 and n
Aurunci Mountains: described, 56, 90. Infiltration and clearance, *see* French Expeditionary Corps. Main features indexed by name
Ausonia: F.E.C. objective, 91, 137; German defence, 139-40
Austria: air attacks, 33, 213 and n; in Allies' strategic debate, 318, 323, 326, 337
Avezzano: air attacks, 151, 204-6; 10th Corps to secure, 256

Baade, Major-General: comd 90 Pz. Gren. Div., 69; and Liri valley, 123, 134, 144n; and Hitler Line, 165, 178-80; retreat, 201
Baker, Air Vice-Marshal G. B. A.,: 458
Balkan Air Force: creation of Command, 401-3; scope and responsibilities, 404; HQ staff, 404n; Air Order of Battle 31st July '44, 406-7
Balkans; and Allied strategy: *see* Adriatic *and* Yugoslavia. German strategy: effects of Soviet offensive, and political upheavals, 338-9; operations in Greece, 339; in Yugoslavia, 339, 393-5; views on Allied intentions, 341; policies for northern Adriatic, 343; Danube, 374-5; military cost of occupying Western Balkans, 393
Bari: as Headquarters, 389, 401; other refs, 24, 350, 407
Battle Groups, German: listed under German Army, indexed by name of commander
Battles Nomenclature Committee: 281n
Beelitz, Colonel: Operations Officer Army Group C, 75, 278
Behr, Lieut.-Colonel Baron von: comd 200th Pz. Gren. Regt and Battle Group, 148, 152
Bernatchez, Brigadier J. P. E.: 176n, 180, 193-4
Besant, Captain A. L., R.N.: 11
Bevin, Mr. E.: 448
Black, Captain I. H. R., R.N.: 404n
Blankey, H.M.S.: 354
Blaskowitz, Colonel-General von: C.-in-C. Army Group G, 345
Bode, Colonel: comd 576th Gren Regt, 72-3; Blocking Group at S. Angelo, 104, 113, 122, 134; Battle Group in Hitler Line, 184, 195
Boehlke, Major-General: comd 334th Inf. Div., 69, 276
Boelsen, Major-General: comd 114th Jäger Div., 247, 254-5
Bologna: 40, 314
Bondis, Colonel: comd Inf. 4th Moroccan Mtn. Div., and of Bondis Group, 144-5; in Aurunci Mtns., 145; to Hitler Line, 149
Bonjour, Colonel: comd 3rd Algerian Recce Regt, and Group, 480n
Boorer, Lieut.: 432
Boucher, Brigadier C. H.: 82n, 121
Bourquin, Major-General: comd 114th Jäger Div., 69; wounded, 247n
Brac: Allied attack on, 395-400; casualties, 400; German reactions, 400-1
Brann, Brigadier-General D. W.: head of Ops staff, 5th Army, 91; visits Truscott, 232-7
Bridges: Bailey, 27, 178; bridging equipment, 76, 77n, 104; 13th Corps' Gari programme, 80-1, 108-9, 115-6, 120; later congestion, 178; Tiber bridges in Rome, 235, 282

British Army Commands and Forces:
8th Army: Alexander's plans for, 7-10; regrouping and reinforcements, 12-13, 248, 256; preparations for 'Diadem', 16-20, 31-3; composition and strengths, 14, 32n, 61n, 97n; directives from A.A.I., 57, 234, 252, 282; and to the Corps, 59-61, 122, 129, 180, 237, 255-6; Gustav Line, 104-22, 128-34; problems in Liri valley, 166, 178-9, 237, 257; effect on Germans of advance, 166, 275-6; Hitler Line, 176-95; advance to Melfa, 196-202; final phase of 'Diadem', 237-43, 246-49, 256-60, 277; boundary shifted, 279; casualties, 284-5; shortcomings, 290-2; achievements, 292-3; administration June-Sept. '44, 426-30, 435-6, 439-42; ammunition shortage, 445. Other refs, 167, 283. *See* Maps 7, 8, 10 and 16

Corps:
5th: A.A.I. orders for, 12, 58; reinforcements, 13; composition, Allfrey comd, 15; administration, 31, 436
10th: composition, McCreery comd, 14, 247n; tasks 61, 238, 256; operations, 247-9; strength, 435n. *See* Map 16
13th: reinforcements, 13, 256; composition, Kirkman comd, 14; tasks, 59-61, 123, 129, 167, 180-1, 200, 238, 256, 259; air support, 67; plans for Gari crossing, 76-84; strengths, 97n, 435n; Gari bridgeheads secured, 104-9, 115-20; commits, 78th Div., 120; and advance into Liri valley, 120-6; casualties, 128; and Cassino, 133; adv. to Hitler Line at Aquino, 179-80, 200; Arce battles, and adv. to Frosinone, 240-7; and to Genazzano, 257-9; achievements, 293. Other refs, 22, 120, 166, 201. *See* Maps 7 and 16

Digitized by Google

British Army Commands and Forces—*cont.*
Armoured Formations and Units:
Armd. Divs:
6th: arr. Italy, 13; in 13th Corps, 14; adv. to Melfa, 178, 200-1, 240; to Arce, 243; receives 61st Inf. Bde, 256; adv. to Genazzano, 259

Armd. Bdes:
7th: arr. Italy, 13
9th: arr. Italy, 13; with 13th Corps, then 10th, 243n; composition, 243n
23rd: in 5th Corps, 15
25th Tank: arr. Italy, 13; in 1st Canadian Corps, 186; composition and strengths, 186n
26th: in 13th Corps, 81n; Gari crossing, 120; composition, 120n; and Aquino, 179; and Genazzano, 259

Armd. Units:
1st Derbyshire Yeomanry: in 13th Corps, 120; gives name to Group, 179n; and Aquino, 179; and Arce, 240-1
16th/5th Lancers: Gari crossing, 120; with 78th Div., 125-7; with 1st Guards Brigade, 242
17th/21st Lancers: Gari crossing, 116-7; strength, 118n; with D. Y. Group, 179 and n, 241. Other refs, 81n, 125
2nd Lothians and Border Horse: Gari crossing, 116; strength and losses, 118-9; enters Arce, 242
North Irish Horse: strength, 186n; and 'Chesterfield', 190-1; losses, 194
4th Recce Regt: 81n
56th Recce Regt: 120n
142nd Regt. Royal Armoured Corps: strength, 186n; losses, 194, 195n
51st Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment: 'Chesterfield', 180, 186, 190-2; strength, 186n; losses, 194

Infantry and Airborne Formations and Units:
Inf. Divs:
1st: in 6th U.S. Corps, 14; composition and strength, 220; adv. to Tiber, 280-2
4th: arr. Italy, 13; in 13th Corps, 14; 'Diadem' planning, 81-2; composition, 81n; Gari crossing, 105-7, 115-9, 123; Liri valley, 125-6; rejoins 13th Corps from Army reserve, 256
5th: in 6th U.S. Corps, 10, 14; composition and strength, 220; adv. to Tiber, 280-2
46th: 13, 449
56th: 10, 13
78th: in 13th Corps' reserve, 14, 78; plans, 120, 123; composition, 120n; Liri valley battles, 124-5, 129-30, 179, 201; adv. to Alatri, 241-3, 246-7, 258; into reserve, 259

Inf. Bdes:
1st Guards: composition, 81n; Arce, 242; casualties, 242n; further adv. 259
2nd Para: in 10th Corps, 14
2nd Special Service: *see* Special Forces
2nd (1st Div.): 220
3rd (1st Div.): 220
10th (4th Div.): composition, 81n; Gari crossing, 81-2, 105-7; Liri valley, 126
11th (78th Div.): composition, 120n; Gari crossing, 120, 123; Liri valley, 125, 129; to Alatri, 247, 258
12th (4th Div.): composition, 81n; Gari crossing, 82, 115-7; Liri valley, 125; patrol in Cassino, 133
13th (5th Div.): 220
15th (5th Div.): 220
17th (5th Div.): 220
18th (1st Div.): 220
24th Guards: in 10th Corps, 14; to 6th S.A. Armd. Div., composition, 256n; advance, 259-60
28th (4th Div.): composition, 81n; Gari crossing, 81, 106-7; history, 106n
36th (78th Div.): composition, 120n; Aquino, 179; adv. to Alatri, 247, 258
38th (78th Div.): composition, 120n; Gari crossing, 120; Liri valley battles, 125-6, 129-30; further adv., 243, 247
61st: in 6th Armd. Div., 256, 259; composition, 256n

Battalions:
1st, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders: 82n; Gari crossing, 108, 121-2
8th, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders: 120n, 179
2nd, The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment: 81n; Gari crossing, 105, 126
6th, The Black Watch: 81n; Gari crossing, 116-9
5th, The Buffs; 120n, 179
2nd, Coldstream Guards: 81n; Arce, 242
2nd, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry: 81n; Liri valley, 117
2nd, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment: 282
1st/6th, The East Surrey Regiment: 81n; Gari, 105
1st, The East Surrey Regiment: 120n; Gari, 125
3rd, Grenadier Guards: 81n; Arce, 242
2nd/4th, The Hampshire Regiment: 81n; Gari, 106 and n; Liri valley, 117-9
2nd, The Highland Light Infantry: on Vis, 391n, 407
1st, The Kensington Regiment: 120n
2nd, The King's Liverpool Regiment: 81n; Gari, 106-7, 117n
2nd, The Lancashire Fusiliers: 120n; Liri valley, 125
2nd, The London Irish Rifles: 120n, 125
5th, The Northamptonshire Regiment: 120n; Liri valley, 125
1st, The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment: 81n; Liri valley, 117 and n, 118-9, 125
5th, The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment: 82n
6th, The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment: 120n
6th Parachute Battalion: 210, 254-5
2nd, The Rifle Brigade: 256n
7th, The Rifle Brigade: 256n

Digitized by Google

British Army Commands and Forces—*cont.*
Battalions—*cont.*
10th, The Rifle Brigade: 120n; with D.Y. Group, 179 and n; 256n
1st, The Royal Fusiliers: 82n; Liri valley, 107-8, 120-1; Arce, 242
2nd, The Royal Fusiliers: 81n; Liri valley, 118
6th, The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers: 120 and n; Liri valley, 129
1st, The Royal Irish Fusiliers: 120n
2nd, The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers: 81n
2nd, The Somerset Light Infantry: 81n; Gari, 106-7, 117n
3rd, Welsh Guards: 81n; and Arce, 242 and n
2nd, The Wiltshire Regiment: 280
For Commandos and Raiding Forces, *see under* Special Forces
For other units and branches of the Army, *see under their titles*, e.g. Royal Artillery
Broadhurst, Air Vice-Marshal H.: 47
Brooke, Field Marshal Sir Alan, C.I.G.S.: personal views on Wilson and Alexander, 20; private message to Alexander, 314-5; at C.C.S. meeting 11th June, 315; against winter campaign in Alps, 317; at P.M. conference 6th July, 335; establishment Balkan Air Force command, 403. *See also under* Alexander
Brooklyn, U.S.S.: 358
Brosset, Major-General D.: comd 1st French Infantry Division, 14
'Buffalo': 6th U.S. Corps' break out from Anzio beachhead, planning and terrain, 221-3; launching orders, 228; progress, 23rd-25th May, 228-232; change of thrust, 233; slow advance to Valmontone, 260-6, 276; assessment, 287-9
Bulgaria: 339
Burns, Lieut.-General E. L.: comd 1st Canadian Corps, 15; assault on Hitler Line, 123, 178-80, 188, 192; and exploitation, 196, 244-6; instructions to Corps 31st May, 256-7
Buttlar, General von: of Operations Branch, OKW, 30, 274

Cabrank: method of direct air support, 67-68n, 157-61, 215
Cairo, Mt: 10, 55-6
Campbell Pride, U.S.S.: 354
Campoleone Station: Operation 'Turtle', 221-3, 233, 261-2, 267; AOK 14, 263, 268

Canadian Forces:
1st Canadian Corps: composition and strength, Burns comd, 15, 97 and n; deception plan, 22, 53; Leese's intentions, 60; committal, 123; approach to Hitler Line, 129, 167, 176-80; movement problems, 178, 181, 244-6, 257; 'Chesterfield', 185-94; casualties, 194; adv. to Melfa, 196-200; to Frosinone, 238, 243-6; into reserve, 256, 259-60. *See also* Map 10.

Armoured Formations and Units:
5th Canadian Armoured Division: composition, 196n; adv. to Melfa, 196-200; further adv. and terrain problems, 245-6; in reserve, 246

Armd. Bdes:
1st (Cdn): in 13th Corps, 14; composition, 83n; with 8th Ind. Div., 109, 121-2; with 78th Div., 179, 241
5th (Cdn): composition, 196n; to Melfa, 196-200; further adv., 245-6

Armd. Units:
1st Armd Car Regt (The Royal Canadian Dragoons): with Adams Force, 200
2nd Armd Regt (Lord Strathcona's Horse, Royal Canadian): 196n, 197-9, 246
5th Armd Regt (8th Princess Louise's New Brunswick Hussars): 196n, 197-200, 244
9th Armd Regt (The British Columbia Dragoons): 196n, 197, 246
11th Armd Regt (The Ontario Regiment): with 8th Ind. Div., 83n, 109, 121, 179
12th Armd Regt (Three Rivers Regiment): with 8th Ind. Div., 83n, 122; with 1st Cdn Inf. Div., 186, 193, 200
14th Armd Regt (The Calgary Regiment): with 8th Ind. Div., 83n, 109, 121-2
3rd Armd Recce Regt (The Governor General's Horse Guards): 196n, 197
4th Armd Recce Regt (4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards): 177n, 188, 200n

Infantry Formations and Units:
1st Canadian Infantry Division: deception plan, 22; relieves 8th Ind. Div., 126; composition, 176n; approach to Hitler Line, 176-80; 'Chesterfield', 185-94; casualties, 194; adv. to Melfa, 200; and to Frosinone, 244-6; further adv., 257, 259. Other refs, 15, 182

Inf. Bdes:
1st: Liri valley, 126, 187; composition, 176n; Hitler Line, 176, 188-94. Other refs, 246, 259
2nd: composition, 176n; Hitler Line, 176, 186-94; casualties, 194. Other refs, 246, 259
3rd: composition, 176n; Hitler Line, 176-80, 186-94
11th: composition, 196n; adv. to Melfa, 200; further adv., 244-5

Inf. Units:
The Cape Breton Highlanders: 196n, 200, 244
The Carleton and York Regiment: 176n, 177, 180, 186, 192, 200
The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment: 176n, 177, 194
The 48th Highlanders of Canada: 176n, 178, 189, 194
The Irish Regiment of Canada: 196n, 197-9
The Loyal Edmonton Regiment: 176n, 186, 191-4, 260
The Perth Regiment: 196n, 200, 244
Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry: 176n, 186, 190-1, 194

Digitized by Google

Canadian Forces—*cont.*
Inf. Units—*cont.*
The Royal Canadian Regiment: 176n, 188, 194, 260
Royal 22e Regiment: 176n, 180, 186, 193-4
The Saskatoon Light Infantry: M.G., 177n
The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada: 176n, 186, 190-1, 194
The West Nova Scotia Regiment: 176n, 186, 194
The Westminster Regiment: M.G., 196n, 197-9, 246
1st Canadian Special Service Battalion: 222n, 223

Royal Canadian Artillery:
1st Army Group: 180, 257

Field Regts.:
1st (R.C.H.A.): 81n, 177n, 180
2nd: 81n, 177n
3rd: 177n
8th: 196n, 197
11th Army: 83n, 197
17th: 196n, 197

Royal Canadian Engineers:
Field Companies:
1st: 177n, 3rd: 177n, 191; 4th: 177n; 12th: 116
2nd Field Park Company: 177n
Field Squadrons: 1st, 10th, and 4th Field Park: 196n
Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers: Plymouth Bridge, 84 and n

Cannon, Major-General J. K.: Commanding General M.A.T.A.F., 5; at conferences, 12, 18n, 318-20; directive for 'Strangle', 36; for 'Diadem', 67
Cargoes: Allied tonnages and vehicle discharges Italy, 11n, 350, 420-1, 423; A.A.I. administration, 24, 419-23
Cäsar Line: history and trace, 227; directives, OKW and Kesselring, 231, 243, 250; Armies' retreat to, AOK 10, 251, 255, 260, 275; AOK 14, 264, 268; 5th Army attacks, 266-8, 271-8; defence S. of Rome abandoned, 313. Other refs, 57, 239. *See* Maps 1, 11 and 14
Cassino, massif and Abbey (Monastery Hill): Polish Corps to capture, 59-60; terrain and plans of attack, 85-8, 130-1; Fourth Battle, 12th May, 109-11; sit. reviewed by Leese, 122; German attitudes, 126-7, 130; Fifth Battle, 132-4; Poles enter Abbey 18th May, 133; casualties to 25th May, 134; Germans withdraw to Aquino, 179. *See* Map 8
Cassino town: German sector commands, 52, 75, 113; 13th Corps to clear, 59, 78-9, 129; Kesselring agrees to abandon, 126; Poles and 13th Corps in contact, 133
Castelforte: 92, 100, 103; entered, 137
Casualties, Allied: 111, 119, 121n, 128, 134, 194, 229, 242n, 284 and n; German: 134, 140-1, 163, 194-5, 250, 284-5
Ceprano: as Canadian objective, 181, 196, 238, 244-6; in German retreat, 202
Ceremonies, Master of: directs German night air attacks, 351-2, 356
'Chesterfield': planning for 1st Cdn Div's assault on Hitler Line, 185-8; subsidiary and main attacks, 188-94. *See also under* Canadian Forces *and* Map 10.
Chiang Kai Shek, Generalissimo: 283
Chiefs of Staff, British: views on capture of Rome, 9; and on 'Anvil' commitment, 299-306; and on divergent policies for Med. Theatre, 300-13, 317, 324; arguments with U.S. C.O.S., 325-32; Intelligence factor, 329; recommendations to P.M., 332, 334-6; Italian campaign discussed, 12th July, 337; Balkan Air Force Command, 400
Chiefs of Staff, United States: views on 'Diadem' objectives and timing, 9, 19; landing craft for 'Anvil', 300-9; Wilson's proposals for N. Italy rejected, 321-5; no concessions to British C.O.S., 328-30; influence on Roosevelt, 331; views on further offensive in Italy, 337 reflections on role in 'Anvil' debate, 337
Chiefs of Staff, Combined: directives to Wilson, February and April '44, 8, 305-6; and landing craft for 'Anvil', 309; first meetings in England, June '44, 315-7; their proposals discussed at A.F.H.Q., 317-22; views of Eisenhower and Wilson received, 322, 324; meeting, 29th June, 331; directive to Wilson, 2nd July, 333; Balkan Air Force Command, 401. Other refs, 282, 306-7.
Churchill, Lieut.-Colonel J. M.: comd 2nd Commando, 397n, 399-400; captured, 400n
Churchill, Brigadier T. B. L.: 392, 397n
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S., Prime Minister and Minister of Defence: views on Rome, 9, 234-5; on 'Diadem' start-date, 19-20; on Alexander's progress, 163; on priorities for offensive, 295; congratulates Clark, 283; concern for future of Italian campaign, 304, 324-7, 335-6; moots landings, west coast of France, 308, 311; welcomes proposals for Adriatic, 326-7; differences with Roosevelt, on policies for 'Anvil', 327-34, 338; views on general war in Europe, 25th June, 392; and on unified Adriatic-Aegean Command, 401. Other refs, 8, 314, 317
Cisterna: 8, 222, 227-31
Civitavecchia: in deception plan, 22, 292; port captured, 429. Other refs, 33, 58, 313, 420
Clark, Lieut.-General J. G. W.: Chief Administration Officer, A.F.H.Q., 410. Other refs. 306n, 437-8
Clark, Lieut.-General Mark W.: Commanding General 5th U.S. Army, 1; at 'Diadem' Conferences, 11, 18; his plans for attack, 61-4; accepts Juin's revision, 91; further intentions for 2nd U.S. Corps and F.E.C., 146, 166; reactions to A.A.I. decisions for 6th U.S. Corps, 221, 228: his change of plan 25th May, 232-3; attitude to capture of Rome, 234; intentions for AOK 14, 237,

Digitized by Google

270; meets Alexdaner 2nd June, 277; enters Rome, 282-3; consequences of change of plan assessed, 287-9; his comments on 'Anvil', 331. Other refs, 59, 145, 149n, 252, 275
Clewes, Major-General N.: 416
Clive, Brigadier A. F. L.: 14
Coastal Forces, Allied: *see under* Royal Navy
Coastal Traffic, German: tonnages carried, 43n, 359n; Italian ports in use, June '44, 359; reduced by air attacks, 363
Collier, Major-General A. L.: comd No 3 District, 416
Commandos: *see* Special Forces *and* Royal Marines
Convoys, sea: types and organization, 24-5, 419, 422-3; sailings, 349; tonnages to Italy, 350, 420; German air attacks, using special method, 350-1; size of convoys restricted, 357
Cori: 222, 228, 233
Corsica: Allied airfields attacked, 157; German views on, as invasion base, 341-5; convoys sighted, 345
Coulter, Major-General J. B.: comd 85th U.S. Div., 14, 172
'Crawdad': contingency plan of attack for 6th U.S. Corps, 221
Crete: German problems of supply, 370, 372; Allies attack convoy, 370; garrison commander kidnapped, 379n
Crittenberger, Major-General W. D.: comd 4th U.S. Corps, 14
Cunningham, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew: First Sea Lord, 358. Other refs, 335, 402
Cunningham, Admiral Sir John: C.-in-C. Mediterranean, 5; at S.A.C. conferences, 318-9, 321; reviews convoy defence, 353; administrative role, 413. Other refs 358, 402

Daniel, Colonel M. W.: 228n
Danube, river: air attacks on quays, 216; R.A.F. minelaying ('Gardening') 373-4; German High Command's measures for traffic, 374-5
Davy, Brigadier G. M. O.: comd Land Forces Adriatic, 404-5
Deception: success in Spring offensive, *see under* 'Diadem'; effects on German speculations pre-'Anvil', 340-1, 343
De Gaulle, General: 235
De Larminat, General: 149n
De Monsabert, Major-General de Groislard: comd 3rd Algerian Inf. Div., 14; takes Pico, 176. Other refs 103, 145, 174
Desert Air Force: and operational control, 12, 47; Dickson in command, 47; tasks for 'Diadem', 67; some attacks, 12th May, 156; 19th May-5th June, 206-9; role in Adriatic, 391, 404n
Devers, Lieut.-General J. L.: Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre in; supports 'Anvil' at S.A.C. conferences, 318-20; proposed strategy for Italy, 322
'Diadem': Alexander's plan for Spring offensive in Italy, 5-8; A.A.I. planning conferences, 10, 16-20; regrouping and reinforcements, 12-13; deception plan and its results, 22-3, 53, 75, 114-5, 292-3; administrative arrangements, 31-3; 'Strangle' contribution, 44; terrain, characteristics and effect on operations, 55-7, 60-4, 76, 85-7, 90-2, 130-1, 141, 177, 181-4, 198, 223-30, 293; Armies' objectives and tasks, 57-9, 61-4; Air plans, 64-8; composition and state of AOK 10, 11th May, 68-74; plans and compositions of 8th Army's Corps, 76-88; 5th Army's ditto, 89-95, 219-23; main phases of offensive, 95. For progress, 11th/12th May-4th June, *see* Contents Lists Chapters III to V. 8th Army's plans and orders from 14th May, 122-3, 129, 180-1, 237-8, 255-6; 5th Army's, from 18th May, 167, 228, 232-3, 237, 270-1, 279; casualties, 284-6. Reflections and balance sheet, 286-94. *See* Maps 4-11, and 14-16
Dickenson, Captain N. V., R.N.: 384
Dickson, Air Vice-Marshal W. F. D.: comd Desert Air Force, 47
Dido, H.M.S. 358
Dill, Field Marshal Sir John: British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, and 'Diadem' timing, 19; role in 'Anvil' debate, 301-4, 307, 328; characteristics, 309n
Dobree, Brigadier T. S.: 82n, 121-2
Dodelier, Major: comd Armoured Group, French Mountain Corps, 174 and n
Dody, Major-General A. W.: comd 2nd Moroccan Inf. Div. 14, 102-3, 136
Dolfijn: Dutch submarine, 382
Doolittle, Major-General J.: comd U.S. Fifteenth Air Force, 3
Dönitz, Grand Admiral: 379
Dora Line: layback for Gustav Line, 57, 138n; 14th Pz Corps, retreat to, 138, 141, 143. *See* Map 4
Dostler, General A.: comd 75th Corps in N. Italy, 70
'Dragoon': 'Anvil' thus re-named, 1st August '44, 337
Drvar: 394
Duch, Major-General: comd 3rd Carpathian Div. 15, 133

Eagles, Major-General W. W.: comd 45th U.S. Division, 14, 219
Eaker, Lieut.-General I. C.: Air C.-inC. Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, 2; C.-in-C. U.S. Army Air Forces, Med. Theatre, 15; issues directive on general bombing policy, Feb. '44, 36; defines M.A.A.F.'s tasks in 'Diadem', 64; his views on air support for 'Anvil', 318-20, 322, 325; administrative relations with A.F.H.Q. and A.A.I., 415

Digitized by Google

Eden, Mr. Anthony: 335 and n
Eisenhower, General Dwight D.: demands assault shipping for 'Overlord', 8, 300; views on Bordeaux as landing target, 309, 318; to Wilson and C.C.O.S., recommends 'Anvil' as against strike at Trieste, 324; and additional resources for 'Anvil', 333; agrees target date and objectives with Wilson, 336
Elba: mentioned in A.A.I. directive, 5th May, 58; in Kesselring appreciation, 341
Elliot, Air Vice-Marshal W. A.: comd Balkan Air Force, functions and responsibilities, 403-4; H.Q. in Bari, 404n
Ellyson, U.S.S.: 355
Emile Bertin: French cruiser, 358
Esperia: in Dora Line, 57, 143; cleared, 146-8
Evelegh, Major-General V.: comd 6th Armd. Div., 14

Fabian, Captain: comd Battle Group 361st Pz. Gren. Regt., 134, 184, 195
Faggeto, Mt: in Hitler Line, 57; capture, 149
Faito, Mt: Gustav Line keystone, 91, 101-2; cleared, 102-3; other refs, 112, 135
Fammera, Mt: escarpment scaled, 145
Faulenbach, Lieut.-General: comd 356th Inf. Div., 70
Fechteler, U.S.S.: sunk, 354
Feuci, Mt: Gustav Line keystone, 91 ,101-3; cleared, 135-6
Feuerstein, General: comd 51st Mountain Corps, 52; Cassino sector, 75; start of 'Diadem', 112-3 and n, 118; taking-up of Hitler Line, 123-4, 129-30, 134; decisions and orders 23rd-26th May, 195-6, 198, 200-2, 239; state of forces, 254; retreat to Cäsar Line, 255
Fighting French Air Force: 354-6
Florence: and German rail transports, 39-40; as Allied objective, 58, 313, 319. Other refs, 161, 210
Flotillas: *see* Royal Navy
Fondi: in Hitler Line, 57; German defence, 150, 167; entered, 170-2
Forces 136, 168, 273, 408, and No. 1 Special Force Italy: *see* Special Forces
Foreign Armies West (FHW): 340 and n. *See also* German High Command
France: German views on invasion of north-west, 49; and of south, 340-5; air attacks on targets in south, 212 and n, 345; Allied debate on capture of ports, 308-28; Allied troops ashore, 15th August, 346. *See also* 'Anvil' and 'Overlord'

French Forces:
French Expeditionary Corps: composition, Juin comd, 14, 89n; U.S. units attached, 89n, 102 and n; Garigliano bridgehead, 62, 89; aptitudes for mountain warfare, 62, 93, 135, 144, 146; formation of Mountain Corps, 64 and n; strengths, 63n, 89, 93n; Juin's ideas accepted, 91; his plan of manoeuvre, 7th May, 91-3; Corps' attacks on Gustav Line, 101-3, 135-7; exploitation to Hitler Line, 139-40, 144-6, 148-52, 167, 173; ogres to Germans, 147; Pico captured, 174-6; adv. in Sacco valley and Lepini mountains, 252-4; approach to Tiber, 270, 279, 282; casualties, 284n; achievements in 'Diadem', 293-4. Other refs, 165, 188, 201, 260, 276. *See* Maps 5, 9, and 14
Mountain Corps: composition, 63n; tasks, 92-3; progress 13th May, 137; secures Aurunci range, 145-51; adv. to Lenola, 174-6; in Lepini mountains, 252

Armd. Units: 89n, 136n, 174n
Divisions:
1st French Infantry Division: arr. Italy, 13; in F.E.C., 14; composition, 89n; tasks, 92-3; armd. group, 136n; adv. to Hitler Line, 139, 144, 149 and n, 152; into reserve, 174; in Sacco valley, 252; adv. to Tiber, 279, 282
2nd Moroccan Inf. Div.: 14: composition, 89n; tasks, 92; Majo massif, 102-3, 136; exploitation, 139; adv. in Sacco valley, 252; and to Tiber, 279
3rd Algerian Inf. Div.: 14; composition, 89n; tasks, 92; adv. to Castelforte and Ausonia, 103n, 137, 139-40; and to Hitler Line, 145-6, 148, 151-2; and to Pico, 174-6; and to Tiber, 279, 282
4th Moroccan Mountain Division: arr. Italy, 13; in F.E.C., 14; forms Mtn Corps, 63n; composition, 89n; tasks, 92; Majo massif, 136-7; western Aurunci, 144-6, 149-51; through Hitler Line, 174-6

Inf. Bdes.:
1st, 2nd, 4th Inf. Bdes: 89n

Inf. Units:
1st Moroccan Inf. Regt.: 89n, 145 and n, 149, 175
2nd Moroccan Inf. Regt.: 89n, 144, 145 and n
3rd Algerian Inf. Regt.: 89n, 145, 148, 174
4th Moroccan Inf. Regt.: 89n, 102-3, 135
4th Tunisian Inf. Regt.: 89n, 103, 137
5th Moroccan Inf. Regt.: 89n, 136
6th Moroccan Inf. Regt.: 89n, 103, 136-7
7th Algerian Inf. Regt.: 89n, 145-6,
8th Moroccan Inf. Regt.: 89n, 102-3, 136
Moroccan Goums: 63n, 64n, 89n
1st Group of Tabors: 89n; in Guillaume Group, 145 and n, 146, 149, 175
3rd Group of Tabors: 89n; in Bondis Group, 145n
4th Group of Tabors: 89n; in Guillaume Group, 145 and n, 146, 149

Artillery:
Corps troops, and divisional, 89n; U.S. attached, 89n, 102n
Engineers: 89n
Freyberg, Lieut.-General Sir Bernard: comd 2nd New Zealand Division, 14; and G.O.C. 2nd N.Z. Expeditionary Force, 248
Fricke, Admiral: comd Naval Group South, 380-1

Digitized by Google

Fries, Lieut.-General: comd 29th Pz. Gren. Div. 69
Frosinone: and air attacks, 124, 203-4, 206; as Canadian objective, 244-6, 253
Fuel, in Italian campaign: *see* POL (Petrol, Oil, Lubricants)
Furstenburg, Brigadier J. P. A.: 256n

Gammell, Lieut.-General J. A. H.: C.O.S. to S.A.C., 306n; at S.A.C. conferences, 318-9n, 322; to London, 323
'Gardening': minelaying in Danube, 371-4
Gari, river: course, 51; 13th Corps' crossing, 76-81, 104-9, 115-7, 120, 125, 178; value to 'Diadem', 293
Garigliano, river: 22, 55
Garnons Williams, Lieut.-Colonel: 107
Genazzano: 238, 259
Genoa: as target for Allied landings, German views, 341, 344-6; as port, 359
German Air Force: *see* Luftwaffe

German Army Commands and Forces
Army Group B (Rommel): 345-6
Army Group C (Kesselring): in OKW survey, 48; OKW reserve, 48-9, 128, 227; faulty intelligence, 50-3, 75, 114, 292-3; A. Gp. reserves, 68, 114-5, 123, 127-8, 138, 147, 166, 227, 239; composition 11th May, 69-70; HQ bombed, 112; reinforcements, 127-8, 164-5, 250-1, 277n, 286n; Hitler Line, 126, 134, 147-51; command problems, 150, 165, 168; and boundary, 169-70, 172, 240, 243; Cäsar Line, 227, 231, 243, 250, 258, 268, 275, 281; evacuation of Rome, 235-6, 274, 280-1; loss estimates, 250 and n, 284-6; some final orders, 252, 263, 270, 278; 'Diadem' reflections, 286-9; OKW directive 26th July, 343; anti-invasion measures, 344
Army Group E (Löhr): 380. *See also* OB Südost (von Weichs)
Army Group G (von Blaskowitz): 345

Armies:
AOK 10: views, pre-'Diadem', 50-3, 74; regrouping, 52-3, 70-74; composition, von Vietinghoff in command, 69; strengths, 71n, 118n, 130n, 170n; Allied air attacks, 112, 124, 127n, 151, 172, 207-8, 275, 278n; Gustav Line battles, 111-5, 117-8, 123-4; reinforcements, 114, 127-8, 138, 143, 147; Dora and Hitler Lines, 126, 134, 138-40, 143, 147-8; casualties, 163, 195, 250n; withdrawals to end of May, 168-9, 195, 201-2, 238-40; Cäsar Line, 231, 243, 250-1, 255, 258; retreat towards Tivoli, 259-60, 275, 281; 'Diadem' balance-sheet, 287. *See* Maps 4 and 11
AOK 14: supplies, 39, 53; composition, von Mackensen in command, 69, 224; strengths, 71n, 225; cessions, 127; reinforcements, 128, 167, 227, 240n; defence on inter-Army boundary, 166, 240, 243; and on Anzio perimeter, 226-7, 229-31; morale, 225 and n, 258, 273-5; Cäsar Line, 231, 243, 250, 264, 268; casualties, 250n; Valmontone, 264, 268, 274; Mt Artemisio, 268-70; retreat N. of Rome, 275, 280-1. *See* Map 14
AOK 19: 346
Army of Liguria: 346n
Armeegruppe von Zangen: composition, 70 and n; cedes 278th Inf. Div., 127-8n, 224

Corps:
1st Parachute: composition, 69, 224; Anzio perimeter, 226, 262; Cäsar Line, 251, 263-4, 268; Mt Artemisio, Lanuvio, Velletri, 269, 272-4; retreat across Tiber, 278, 280-2. *See* Map 14
14th Panzer: regrouping, pre-'Diadem', 51-3, 73-4; composition, 71-2; Gustav Line, 112-5, 126, 138; reinforcements, 124, 127, 141, 147-8, 240 and n; Orange and Dora Lines, 138-41, 143; Hitler Line, 147-52, 168-76; some strengths, 169n; withdrawals towards Tivoli to end of May, 201-2, 238-40, 251-4; to 4th June, 258-9, 275-6. *See* Maps 4 and 9
51st Mountain: sector commands, 52; composition 11th May, 69-74; Gustav Line, 112-26; Battle Groups, 113, 124, 134, 184; Cassino, 127, 130-4; reinforcements, 127, 134, 185, 195; Liri valley, 129-30 and n; Hitler Line, Pontecorvo to Aquino, 135, 178, 184, 195-6; losses, 195, 201n; retreat to Ceprano, 200-2, 248; and to Sora, 239, 249, 254-5; plans for Cäsar Line, 255. *See* Maps 4 and 11
75th: 70
76th Panzer: composition, 69, 224-5; Anzio perimeter, 229-31; Valmontone sector, 243, 251, 262-4, 268; Lepini Mtns., 252-3, 268; reinforcements, 253, 262, 264; Mt Artemisio, 268-70; on verge of breakdown, 273, 278, 280; to form Tivoli bridgehead, 281. *See* Map 14
Korpsgruppe Hauck: composition, 52, 69; transfers and replacement, 127 and n, 128
Corps Kübler: 70
Corps Witthöft: 70

Divisions:
1st Parachute: in 51st Mtn Corps, 52, 69, 72-3, 112; Cassino battles, 113-4, 125-6, 130-3; Hitler Line, 134, 179, 184, 195; west of Melfa, 203-4, 239, 242, 247; losses, 250n; to Tivoli, in 14th Pz. Corps, 254, 259-60; on standby, 344
3rd Panzer Grenadier: in 1st Para Corps, 69, 225; Anzio perimeter, 226, 262-3; operations S. of Rome, 264, 267-8, 274, 289
4th Para: in 1st Para Corps, 69, 226; Cäsar Line, 262, 268, 272; in Alban hills, 277-8, 280
5th Mountain: in 51st Mtn Corps, 52, 69-73; and Hitler Line, 124n, 134, 184, 195; to Cäsar Line, 195, 201n, 202, 239, 248, 254-5; losses, 201n, 250n
7th SS Mtn: and Brac, 401

Digitized by Google

German Army Commands and Forces: Divisions—*cont.*
15th Pz. Gr: in AOK 10, split 11th May, 69, 71-4; reserve, *see* 104th Pz. Gren Regt; Gustav Line, 115, 138; Hitler Line, 147, 169, 176; strength, 169n; Lepini Mts, 253-4; to Tivoli. 259-60, 281; standby, 344
16th SS Pz. Gr: OKW reinforcement, 128, 164, 277n, 312n
19th Luftwaffe Field: OKW reinforcement, 165, 277n, 312n
20th Luftwaffe Field: OKW reinforcement, 130, 164 and n, 277n, 312n
26th Panzer: A. Gp. reserve, split, 68, 74n; to 14th Pz. Corps, 127, 148, 151; Hitler Line, 151, 169, 174-6; strength. 169n; to Cäsar Line, 245-6, 253-4, 259-60
29th Pz. Gr: A. Gp. reserve, 53, 68, 74n; to AOK 14, 127-8, 166, 169; Hitler Line, 172-3; div split, 240 and n; Lepini Mts, 264, 273, 278; losses, 250n; retreat towards Cäsar Line, 251-4, 259-60
34th Inf: 346n
42nd Jäger: OKW reinforcement, 164, 312n, 346n
44th Inf: in 51st Mtn Corps, split, 52, 71-4; Gustav Line, 113, 124; Hitler Line, 202; to Cäsar Line, 239, 247-9, 254-5
65th Inf: in 1st Para Corps, 69, 225-6, 230, 274
71st Inf: in 14th Pz. Corps, split, 52, 69, 71-4; Gustav Line battles, 100-3, 112-5; Orange, Dora, and Hitler Lines, 138-51; losses, 148, 250n
90th Pz. Gr: A. Gp. reserve, split, 53, 68, 74n; committal and sectors, 115, 123-4 and n, 127, 150, 169n; Hitler Line battles, 178, 195-6; to Ceprano, 198-202, 242; losses, 201n, 250n; to Cäsar Line, 254, 260, 278; to Genoa, 344-6
92nd Inf: in AOK 14, forming, 69, 225 230, 232, 252
94th Inf: in 14th Pz. Corps, 69, 71 and n, 74; Gustav Line battles, 100, 112, 141-3; Hitler Line, 147-52, 169, 172; losses, 250n; to Cäsar Line, 254, 259-60
114th Jäger: in 51st Mtn Corps, 52, 69, 71; opp. 10th Corps, 202, 239, 247-8; retreats, 254-5
118th Jäger: and Brac, 395-401
162nd (Turkoman) Inf: 70, 312n
188th Mtn Reserve: 70, 128n, 312n
264th Inf: and Brac, 401
278th Inf: in Istria, 70; moves south, 127 and n
305th Inf: Adriatic wing, 52, 69; units with 51st Mtn Corps, 11th May, 23rd May, 72-4, 184; rest to Hitler Line, 127, 134, 151, 175n, 201n; retreats with 14th Pz., 254, 259-60; air attacks, 278n
334th Inf: Adriatic wing, 52, 69; to AOK 10, 127, 134; with AOK 14, 252-3, 264, 276; air attacks, 278
356th Inf: at Genoa, 70; moves south, 277, 312n
362nd Inf: in 76th Pz. Corps, 69, 225; Anzio perimeter, 226, 229-31; casualties, 250n; Cäsar Line, 264, 267-8, 273; Mt Artemisio, 269, 274; scattered, 280; in 'Diadem' assessment, 288-9
715th Inf: in 76th Pz. Corps, 69, 225; Anzio perimeter, 226. 229-30; casualties, 250n; scattered, 262, 271; Mt Artemisio, 269-70; in 'Diadem' assessment, 288-9
Brandenburg Division: in Balkans, 394
Hermann Göring Panzer: OKW reserve, 48, 68, 70 and n, 128; A. Gp. reserve, 227; in action with AOK 14, 232, 238, 253, 263-5, 272-3; Mt Artemisio, 269; retreats, 276; air attacks, 278n

Regiments and Battalions (arms as designated):
1st Para Regt: 72, 113, 118, 125, 184
3rd Para Regt: 72, 109, 132-34, 184, 198
4th Para Regt: 72, 134, 184
11th Para Regt: 278-80
12th Para Regt: 273, 277
Para M. G. Bn: 117, 184
3rd Alpine Bn: 72, 148-52, 169n, 175
4th Alpine Bn: 72, 134
1st Bn, 4th Pz. Regt: 127, 175, 198-9
8th Pz. Gr. Regt: 225, 252, 262-4
9th Pz. Gr. Regt: 68, 127, 148, 151-2, 174, 176
15th Pz. Gr. Regt: 172, 252, 263
26th Pz. Regt: 68, 175, 185
29th Pz. Gr. Regt: 225, 263
44th Replacement Bn: 124n, 184, 188
56th Werfer Regt: 127, 185
67th Pz. Gr. Regt: 68, 173, 175
71st Pz. Gr. Regt: 172
71st Werfer Regt: 129n, 264
85th Mountain Regt: 72, 124n, 184, 201n
85th Recce Bn: 113n, 134, 184
94th Fusilier Bn: 71, 143
100th Mtn Regt: 72, 134, 199
104th Pz. Gr. Regt: 71, 114-5, 127, 141, 147-50, 169n, 175
114th Recce Bn: 71 and n, 143
115th Pz. Gr. Regt: 71, 102, 104, 116-7, 134, 138
115th Recce Bn: 72, 139, 143
131st Gr. Regt: 71, 73, 102, 112, 135, 139, 143, 148-51
132nd Gr. Regt: 72-3, 134, 242, 248 and n, 249
134th Gr. Regt: 72-3, 134, 169n, 174, 246, 248 and n, 249
171st Recce Bn: 71, 101, 135
190th Engineer Bn: 124n, 129n, 184
190th Pz. Bn: 124n, 129n
190th Panzerjäger Bn: 124n, 184
190th Recce Bn: 124n, 129n, 177
191st Gr. Regt: 71, 101, 139-40, 143, 148
194th Gr. Regt: 71, 100, 137-40, 143, 148
200th Pz. Gr. Regt.: 68, 114-5, 139, 143, 148, 152, 199, 201n
211th Gr. Regt: 71, 100n, 140, 143
267th Gr. Regt: 71, 100 and n, 147, 150, 169n
274th Gr. Regt: 71, 100 and n, 147, 169n, 170-2
276th Gr. Regt: 71, 100, 147, 169n, 172, 176
305th Engineer Bn: 134, 184, 201n
305th Füsilier Bn: 72, 148
334th Engineer Bn: 134, 184

Digitized by Google

German Army Commands and Forces: Regiments and Battalions—*cont.*
361st Pz. Gr. Regt: 68, 124 and n, 129n, 130n, 134, 184, 195, 198-201n
400th Recce Bn: 148-52, 169n, 172
525th Panzerjäger Bn: 141 and n
576th Gr. Regt: 72, 74, 113, 121-5, 134, 177, 184, 195, 201n
577th Gr. Regt: 175 and n
578th Gr. Regt: 151, 175 and n
721st Jäger Regt: 72, 113n, 116, 184
741st Jäger Regt: 72, 113n, 116, 184
765th Gr. Regt: 264, 276
1027th Pz. Gr. Regt: 127, 169n, 176-7, 224, 245
1060th Gr. Regt: 232, 288
1st Hermann Göring Pz. Gr. Regt: 265, 269, 272
2nd H.G. Pz. Gr. Regt: 262, 265, 273
H.G. Recce Bn: 232, 262, 265, 276
German Battle Groups: von Behr, 148; Bode, 134; Fabian, 134; Heilmann, 134; Maetschke, 147; Matthes, 139; Nagel, 139; Rumohr, 140; von Ruffin, 134; Schulz, 113; Straffner, 124
German High Command: balance of forces, 48; OKW reserves, 48-9, 128, 227, 239; views on Allied strategy for Med. Theatre, 49-50, 128, 340-5, 378-80; reinforcements for Italy, 128, 164-5, 277n, 286 and n; Cäsar Line, 227, 231, 243; AOK 10's plans 239; Rome, 235-6, 274; orders for Kesselring, June '44, 274-5, 329; policies for Balkans, 338-9, 377-9, 394; shortcomings of Intelligence services, 340 and n 341; 'Anvil', 345-6; Danube. 372-5. Other refs, 115, 263, 270
German Navy, High Command: Italian dockyards, 359; Aegean, 380-1; Danube, 374
German Naval Staff: views on Allied strategy, 49, 342-3, 345; air recce in Med., 339-40

Gertrud: convoy, 371-2
Gibson, Brigadier T. G.: 176n, 192
Giles, Lieut.-Commander M., R.N.: Senior Naval Officer, Vis, 385, 397, 400
Girofano, Mt: keystone of Gustav Line, 92, 101-2; cleared, 135-6
Gore, Brigadier A. C.: 256
Göring, Reichsmarschall Hermann: 164n
Göritz, Lieut.-General: comd 92nd Inf. Div., 69, 225
Gothic Line: 57n. *See also* Pisa-Rimini Line, *and* Map 1
Grainger, Private H. W.: 105
Gräser, Lieut.-General: comd 3rd Pz. Gr. Div., 69, 225
Graziani, Marshal: 346n
Greece: 339, 379-81
Greek Sacred Squadron: 378
Gregson-Ellis, Major-General P. G. S.: comd 5th (British) Div, 14, 220
Greiner, Lieut-General: comd 362nd Inf. Div., 69, 225
Griffin, Lieut.-General P. G.: comd Griffin Force, 197-8
Grigg, Sir James: 307n
Grundherr, Colonel von: 255
Guillaume, Brigadier-General A.: comd Moroccan Goums, 14; and Group, in Aurunci Mtns, 145 and n, 146, 149
Gustav Line: history, 1-2, 5; Alexander's plan of attack, 7-8; course, and strength of defences, 56, 101, 104, 142; breaking of, *see* Contents List Ch. III; German retreat from, 126, 134, 147-50, 152; and 'Diadem' assessment, 286, 294

Hambleton, U.S.S.: 355
Harding, Lieut.-General A. F.: C.O.S., A.A.I., 5, 20, 319-20; contribution to 'Diadem', 294
Harmon, Major-General E. N.: comd 1st U.S. Armd. Div., 14, 219
Hartmann, General: acting GOC 14th Pz. Corps, 51; and changes in sector commands, 52-3, 73; requests reinforcements, 114, 138; retreat from Gustav Line, 138, 142, 148-50
Hauck, Major-General: comd 305th Inf. Div., 69, 175n
Hauser, Major-General: C.O.S., AOK 14, 166, 273, 278
Hawkesworth, Major-General J. L.: comd 1st (British) Div., 14
Haydon, Brigadier J. C.: 81n
Heber-Percy, Brigadier A. G. W.: 81n, 116
Heel Ports: 11n, 24, 349-50
Heidrich, Lieut.-General: comd 1st Para Div., 69, 72; defence of Cassino, 107, 125, 130, 134; sector commands, 113, 124; Hitler Line, 165, 179-80; retreats, 201-2
Heilmann, Lieut.-Colonel: comd 3rd Para Regt. and Battle Group, 134, 179, 184, 195
Hermon, Brigadier R. A.: 15
Herr, General: comd. 76th Pz. Corps, 69, 225; Anzio perimeter, 229-31; pressures S. of Rome, 264, 269, 273, 278
Hewitt, Vice-Admiral H. K., U.S.N.: 321 and n
Heydeman, Major-General C. A.: comd No. 1 District, 416
Hildebrandt, Major-General: comd 715th Inf. Div., 69, 225
Hitler, Adolf: meets Mussolini, 49; orders reinforcement of N. France, 49; and of Italy, 128, 164, 227, 274; decisions for *Führerriegel*/Senger Line, 181-2; for Cäsar Line, 231, 243; for Balkans' oil programme, 213, 374; for Rome, 235, 274; for Central Italy, 329; for Western Balkans, and Aegean, 338-9, 372, 379; for S. France, 346. Other refs, 48, 207, 286
Hitler Line: also Senger, 56, 181; course, and strength of defences, 57, 181-4; AOK 10 retreats to, 126, 134, 147-8; Allies' breaking of, *see* Contents List Ch. IV; deployment of German Battle Groups, and arty. support, 184-5; withdrawal from, 195, 201-2; and 'Diadem' assessment, 286, 294

Digitized by Google

Hoffmeister, Major-General B. M.: comd 5th Canadian Armd. Div., 15, 178, 185, 196, 244
Holder, U.S.S.: damaged, 352
Holworthy, Major-General A. W.: comd 4th Indian Div., 15
Hoppe, Lieut.-General: comd 278th Inf. Div., 70
Hösslin, Lieut.-General: comd 188th Mtn. Reserve Div., 70
Howze, Colonel H. H.: comd reserve, 1st U.S. Armd. Div., 228n; and Task Force, 261n, 262-5, 272-3, 276, 279
Hungary: Allied air attacks, 45-6, 214; P.M.'s views on, 326-7

Indian Forces:
Armd. Units:
6th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers: 82n

Inf. Divs:
4th: in 5th Corps, 15, 86
8th: in 13th Corps, 14; tasks and plans, 78-9, 82-4; composition, 82n; Gari crossing, 107-9; 'Horseshoe' cleared, 120-2, 126; relief, 126; adv. N. of Liri and Sacco, 200-1, 241-2, 247, 258-9
10th: arr. Italy, 13; in 5th Corps, 15

Inf. Bdes.:
17th, (8th Ind. Div.): composition, 82n; Gari, 83, 107-8; 'Horseshoe', 120-1; Arce, 242; further adv., 258
19th (8th Ind. Div.): composition, 82n; Gari, 83, 108, 121-2, 124; adv. from Melfa, 242, 247, 258
21st (8th Ind. Div.): composition, 82n; in reserve, 83; committed, 122, 126, 200

Battalions:
1st, 12th Frontier Force Regiment: 82n, 107-8, 120, 242
6th Royal, 13th Frontier Force Rifles: 82n, 83, 121, 124
1st, 5th Gurkha Rifles, Frontier Force: 82n, 107, 121, 242
1st, 5th Mahratta Light Infantry: 82n, 122
M.G., 5th Mahratta Light Infantry: 82n, 122
3rd, 8th Punjab Regiment; 82n, 108, 121
3rd, 15th Punjab Regiment: 82n, 122

Artillery:
5th Mahratta A/Tk Regiment: 82n, 122

Engineers:
Bengal Sappers and Miners: 84, 108-9, 293
7th Field Company: 82n, 84
66th Field Company: 82n, 84, 116
69th Field Company: 82n, 84, 116
47th Field Park Company: 82n
Railway Units in Italy: 424 and n
Inglis, Brigadier L. M.: 247n
Interdiction, bombing policy: 35-8, 44
Ismay, Lieut.-General Sir H.: 315, 317
Istria: as strategic target, Allied views on, 318, 324-6, 330; OKW ditto, 341-4
Italian Corps of Liberation (CIL): composition in 10th Corps, 247n; operations, 248

James, Brigadier, J. G: 120n, 179
Jefferson, Fusilier F. A., V.C.: 125
Jodl, Colonel-General, Chief of Ops Branch, OKW: strategic survey, 48 and n; other refs, 128, 231
Johnson, Major-General H., U.S. Army: comd Rome Area, 417
Joint Staff Mission, Washington: functions, 309n; other refs, 302, 322, 328, 330-1
Juin, General A.: comd French Expeditionary Corps, 14; mountain warfare, Gustav Line, 62-5, 89-93, 135-7; pursuit to Hitler Line, 144, 167, 173-4; views on adv. to Rome, 236, 252, 279; contribution to 'Diadem', 293. Other refs 103, 149 and n

Keightley, Major-General C.F.: comd 78th Div., 14, 120n, 123-5, 178, 243, 258
Keitel, Field Marshal: 46
Kesselring, Field Marshal, OB Südwest and C.-in-C. Army Gp. C: views on Allied landings, (April-12th May) 21, 51-2, 75, 114-5; (June-Aug.) 341-2, 344; handling of reserves, 53, 114-5, 123, 127-8, 147-8, 166, 227; HQ bombed, 112; Gustav Line battles, 114 118, 124-5; withdrawals to Hitler Line, 126-7, 140-4, 147-8; his command abilities, 164-5, 225 and n; tactical decisions, 19th-26th May, 166-9, 173, 196, 202, 230, 240; Cäsar Line, 227, 231, 243, 250-1, 258; evacuation of Rome, 236, 274, 278-80; defence of Valmontone sector, 237, 243, 252, 263-4, 274, 278; state of Army Group, 250; Mt Artemisio, 270; ops. N. of Rome, 281; estimates casualties, 284-5; in 'Diadem' assessment, 289, 292-3; anti-invasion measures, 344-6. Other refs, 2, 53, 176, 180, 207, 243
Keyes, Major-General G. T.: comd 2nd U.S. Corps, 14; plan of attack, 93-5; adv. to Terracina, 146, 167; and to Rome, 279
King, Admiral E. J.: and 'Anvil', 309, 328, 331
Kingsmill, Captain H. A.: Plymouth bridge, 84
Kirkman, Lieut.-General S. C.: comd 13th Corps, 14; his plans for 'Diadem', 76-84; and for 78th Div., 119-23, 259; and for adv. to Alatri, 200, 258; comments on exploitation, 257
Klett, Lieut.-General: to command 94th Inf. Div., 165
Klinckowström, Colonel Graf von: C.O.S. 51st Mtn Corps, 134, 195

Digitized by Google

Kluge, Field Marshal von: OB West, 342 and n, 346
Kreipe, Major-General: 380n
Kübler, General: 70
Kurek, Colonel: 86n, 131
Lammie, Major-General G.: 416
Land Forces Adriatic: formation, 403-5; Order of Battle, June '44, 407-8
Landing, airborne: at Toricelle, 210, 254
Landings, from sea: in 'Diadem' deception plans, 21-3, 292-3; Anglo-U.S. debate on options in Med. Theatre, 299-333; German speculations, 340-1, 378-80; Anglo-Yugoslav raids on Dalmatian islands, 392, 395-401. *See also* 'Anvil' and 'Overlord'.
Landing ships and craft: conflicting priorities for Med., 296; U.S. offers, and 'Anvil', 300-1, 304, 308-9; and supplies, 436
Lange, Admiral: Aegean, 372, 380-1
Langford-Sainsbury, Air Vice-Marshal T. A.: A.O.C. Air HQ Eastern Mediterranean, 359n
Lansdale, U.S.S.: sunk, 353
Lanuvio: in Cäsar Line, 227; as 'Turtle' objective, 233, 261, 263, 266-7, 273
Leese, Lieut.-General Sir Oliver: comd 8th Army, 1, 14; 'Diadem' planning, 10-11, 18; directive, 11th April, 59-61; Monastery Hill, 111, 122-3, 125; commits 1st Canadian Corps, 129; orders for Hitler Line, attack and exploitation, 179-81; orders for Cdn Corps, 186-8, 260; tactics for armoured divs, 237, 290-1; Instruction 22nd May, 237-8; regrouping for adv. N.E. Rome, 255-6; meets Alexander, 1st June, 277; his judgement of ground, 290-1
Leghorn: 51, 341; port closed, 359; captured by Allies, 429. Other refs, 58. 65, 428
Lemelsen, General: 270 and n
Lenola: 169, 175-6
Lepini Mountains: 252-3, 276. *See also* French Expeditionary Corps.
Lietzmann, Vice-Admiral: Adriatic, 394, 401
Liri, river: 52, 56, 76, 188, 205; valley, and A.A.I. Order 5th May, 58; Leese's plans, 60, 123, 129, 167; 'going', 124-5, 177, 198, 257, 290
Ljubljana Gap: 319, 324, 326
Lloyd, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Hugh: comd M.A.C.A.F., 353
Loewen, Brigadier: 220
Löhr, General: comd Army Group E, 380
Low, Brigadier: 417
Luftflotte 2: 153
Luftwaffe: and decline in Italy, 34, 45, 153; losses, 34, 153, 207, 352-3, 356; strengths, 68, 153, 350n; attacks Corsica, 157; fuel shortage, 341; Intelligence, 342-3; attacks convoys, 351-3, 356-7; special method, 351; Aegean, 372; Danube, 374-5
Luftwaffe Field Divisions: 164n
Lüttwitz, General von: comd 26th Pz. Div., 69, 169, 174
Lyttelton, Mr. O.: 335 and n
Mackensen, Colonel-General von: comd AOK 14, 5; views on Allied intentions, 53, 127, 226, 263, 268; A. Gp. reserves, 127, 166, 226, 264; relations with Kesselring, 165, 225 and n, 270; boundary problems, 169, 226, 243, 251-2; Anzio, 229-31; Cäsar Line, 243, 268; troubles S. of Rome, 269, 273-4, 278; loses command, 270; retreat over Tiber, 280-2
Maclean, Brigadier: comd No. 37 Military Mission, 403-6
Macmillan, Mr. H.: 324 and n, 404
McCreery, Lieut.-General Sir Richard: comd 10th Corps, 14. Other refs, 90, 247-8
Maetschke, Colonel: comd 104th Pz. Gren. Regt and Battle Group, 147, 150
Mahony, Major J. K., V.C.: 199
Majo, Mt: Gustav Line keystone, 56, 91, 101; in French hands, 137
Manners, Lieut.-Colonel J. C.: 399, 400 and n
Mansfield, Rear Admiral J. M.: 358
Marder: German 'human torpedo', 357 and n
Marschall, General-Admiral: 374
Marshall, General G. C., C.O.S. U.S. Army: 'Anvil' debate, 300-5, 315, 319-22, 328-31
Marshalling-yards: bombing policy, 35-6, 44; attacks on, Apr.-12.5.44., *see under* 'Strangle'; post-'Strangle', *see under* Air Attacks
Marseilles: 322, 324, 336
Matthes, Lieut.-Colonel: comd 191st Gren Regt, and Battle Group, 139-40, 143, 148
Mauritius, H.M.S.: 358
Mediterranean Air Transport Service: 28
Mediterranean Allied Air Forces: and bombing policy, 2, 36; air transport, 28; sorties, 33, 153-5, 203, 210, 360; and Tables foll. p. 53, 161, 217; losses, 34, 153; tasks for 'Diadem', 64-7; strength 12th May, 66; application of air power, 215-7; contribution to 'Diadem', 287, 294; supplying Resistance Groups, 390-1 and n; Balkan Air Force, 403-4; general admin., 458. For Order of Battle, 12th May '44, *see* Appendix 1.
Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force: 'Strangle', 38; 'Diadem', 65, 210; interception, 351; anti-shipping operations, 359, 363-6; support for Partisans, 391, 394-5; Balkan Air Force, 404n
Mediterranean Allied Photographic Reconnaissance Wing: contributes to 'Strangle' and 'Diadem', 68, 292; surveys ports, 363
Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force: tasks for 'Diadem', 12, 64-7; and 'Strangle', 36; sorties, targets within Italy, 40, 112, 156-8, 210, 215; direct support, 206-7; targets outside Italy, 158, 211-4; strategic contribution, 217; attacks on ports and shipping, 361-3; Danube, 374; support at Brac, 400

Digitized by Google

Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force: 'Strangle', 36 and n, 37; sorties, totals, 37, 210, and Tables foll. p. 53, 161, 217; tasks for 'Diadem', 65-7; effort, 12th-19th May, 155-61; effort, 19th May-5th June, 203-10; role evaluated, 215; tribute from Alexander, 313; 'Anvil' dispute, 322, 325; responsibilities in Adriatic, 366, 404n
Mediterranean A.A. Advisory Committee: 448-9
Melfa, river: 1st Cdn Corps' adv. to, 196-200; 13th Corps', 200; Germans' retreat from, 201-2. *See* Map 10
Menges, U.S.S.: 354
Merchant Shipping, Allied: Mediterranean convoys, 24, 349-57; losses, Apr.-June '44, 357; administration, 419-23
Merchant Shipping, German: supply for Italy and Balkans, 43 and n, 359 and n, 364; losses in port Apr.-June '44, 360-3; at sea, 363-72, 375-8, 381-4; problems in Aegean, 381; Table, 388
Middle East Command: formations moved to/from Italy, 13; General Staff Reserve, 437-8; reinforcements, 449
Miles, Brigadier H. G. P.: 391, 399-400
Mitchell, Brigadier F. N.: 81n, 120n
Model, Field Marshal: 342n
Morgan, Rear-Admiral C. E., R.N.: 391, 403
Morse, Rear-Admiral G. A. V., R.N.: 18n
Motor Transport, Allied: organization and allocations, 26, 88, 241, 429-36; staff work, 291, 435; lack of standardization, 457
Motor Transport, German: losses and attrition, 154, 205-9, 232, 250
Mould, Brigadier B. S.: 82n
Mules: totals in service, 27 and n, 453; with Polish Corps, 88; with F.E.C., 89, 93n, 294 and n; forage, 453-4
Murphy, Brigadier W. C.: 14, 83n, 177n
Mussolini, Benito: 49

Nagel, Colonel: comd 131st Gren Regt and Battle Group, 139, 142, 148-9, 174
Naples: and ports group, 11n; cargo handled, 24, 350; German Intelligence, 344-6
Nares, Major-General E. R.: comd No. 2 District, 416
Naval Forces and Operations, Allied: Warships and Submarines indexed by name. *See* Royal Navy
Naval Forces, German:
minor war vessels: ferry barges and 'F' lighters, 359n; E-, R-, M-boats, 360n, 386; Siebel ferries, 370n; torpedo-boats (ex-Italian), 360n, 371-2, 382-4; *UJ* boats, 363n; losses, all types, tabulated, 364-5, 368-9. Submarines; *indexed under* U-boats
Nebelwerfer: 79, 86; with AOK 10, 127, 129n, 185; with AOK 14, 225; losses, 250n

New Zealand Forces:
2nd New Zealand Division: 14; composition, Freyberg comd, 247n; adv. to Sora, 248-9; to Avezzano, 255
Armoured Formations and Units:
4th N.Z. Armd. Bde: 247n
18th N.Z. Armd. Regt: 81n, 242, 247n
19th N.Z. Armd. Regt: 125, 247n
20th N.Z. Armd. Regt: 247n
Divisional Cavalry Regt: 247n

Infantry Brigades:
5th N.Z. Inf. Bde: 247n, 248-9
6th N.Z. Inf. Bde: 247n, 249

Artillery: 87, 247n
Engineers: 247n
Niedermayer, Major-General von: comd. 167 (Turkoman) Div, 70
Noble, Admiral Sir Percy: 331
Normandy/Northwest Europe: *see* 'Overlord'

O'Daniel, Major-General J. W.: comd 3rd U.S. Inf. Div., 14, 219, 265
Oil: air attacks on installations, 45, 158, 213-5; and the German economy, 46, 213, 339, 372-5
Orange Line: 57, 138-40
Orion, H.M.S.: 358
Ortner, Lieut.-General: comd 44th Inf. Div., 69, 72; sector commands, 74-5, 113, 124, 150; and Ortner Group, 248n, 254-5
O.S.S.: Office of Strategic Services, 387 and n, 390, 403-5, 408
'Overlord': Allied invasion of Normandy, and Quebec Conference, 4; air support from M.A.A.F., 28, 212 and n; help from Italian campaign, 282, 286, 296; claims shipping from Med.. 296, 358; dominates 'Anvil' debate, 298-337; ammunition shortage, 447

Palmer, Brigadier R. J.: 14, 256n
Panther Turrets: in Hitler Line, 124n, 183
Parkinson, Brigadier: 247n
Partisans, Italian: 260, 390n
Partisans, Yugoslav: and Yugoslav Army of National Liberation, 389 and n; Allied policy towards, 307, 389-93, 403-5; Germans harrassed by, 339-40, 394; Brac, 397-400. *See also Rösselsprung*
Petrella, Mt: 90, 140, 145-7
Pfeifer, Major-General: comd 65th Inf. Div., 69, 224
Philadelphia, U.S.S.: 358
Pico: German defence, 148, 168, 175; capture by F.E.C., 167, 174-6
Piedimonte: in Hitler Line, 57, 184; Polish objective, 180, 200-1, 238
Pisa-Rimini Line: term for region of Allied advance, 16, 57 and n; in 'Anvil' debate, 313-24; German intentions revealed, 329
Po, river and valley: as A.A.I. objective, Anglo-U.S. views, 315-23; S.A.C.'s instructions 5th July, 336
Pohl, General Ritter von: 45n

Digitized by Google

'Pointblank': Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany, 3; sorties by M.A.A.F., 33, 45-6, 212-4
Poland: 339
Ploesti: 45, 158, 213, 372

Polish Forces
2nd Polish Corps: composition, Anders comd, 15, 86n; maintenance and tasks for 'Diadem', 31, 59-61; Mt Cassino, terrain and plan of attack, 85-8; strength in artillery, 87; and in personnel, 97n; first assault, 109-11; regrouping and second assault, 130-4; casualties, 111, 134, 284n; further adv., 180, 238; maintenance, E. coast, 436

Armoured Formations and Units: *see* Order of Battle, 86n

Infantry Divisions:
3rd Carpathian Division: 87, 109-11, 132-3
5th Kresowa Division: 87, 109-10, 131-4
See also Order of Battle, 86n

Artillery: 86n, 87, 109-10 and n
Engineers: 86n
POL (Petrol, Oil, Lubricants): A.A.I. holdings and receipts, 25n and 26n; supply to land forces, 26, 31-2, 439-43; to R.A.F., 443-4; reserves, 32, 437-8, 444
Pontecorvo: in Hitler Line, 57; German defence, 134, 169, 181-4, 195; Operation 'Chesterfield', 185-94
Poole, Major-General W. H. Evered: comd 6th S.A. Armd. Div., 15, 256n, 260
Portal, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles, C.A.S.: 317, 335
Porto Marghera: 215
Pritchard, Brigadier C. H. V.: 14

Raapke, Lieut.-General: comd 71st Inf. Div., 69-71, 138-40, 147, 169
Railways, Italian: Allied administration, 25-6, 31-2 and n, 313, 423-8; bombing policy, 34-6; air attacks, Apr.-12 May '44, *see* 'Strangle'; post-'Strangle', *see under* Air Attacks. *See also* Maps 3 and 19
Rakowski, Major-General: comd 2nd Polish Armd. Bde., 15, 86n, 87
Ram, Sepoy Kamal, V.C.: 108
'Rankin': 300 and n
Rapido, river: *see* Gari
Rations: A.A.I. holdings, 25n; scales and preparation, 450-4
Reid, Major-General D.: comd 10th Indian Div., 15
Reinforcements, Allied: to Italy, Feb.-May '44, 13; shortages, 30-1, 448-50; remedial measures, 448
Reinforcements, German: for A. Gp. C. from outside Italy, 128, 164-5, 250-1, 277n, 286 and n
Reserves, Supplies and Stores: *see* Administration (General Staff Reserve)
Resistance forces: *see* Partisans
Revole, Mt: 92, 145-6
Rieti: 238, 255-6
Roads, Italian: Allied administration, 26-8, 31, 412, 429-37; traffic problems, 177-8, 181, 200, 241, 246, 257; German withdrawals, 203-9, 239, 259, 275. *See also under* Air Attacks
Robertson, Major-General Sir Brian: Chief Administrative Officer, A.A.I., 10-11, 24; contribution to 'Diadem', 292; Alexander's plan, June '44, 320; admin. during adv. to Gothic Line, 411, 427-9, 438; foresight, 457-9
Rocket Projectiles: described, 366-70
Roddick, Brigadier M. G.: 243n
Rodt, Major-General: comd 15th Pz. Gren. Div., 69-71, 147, 169, 176
Rogers, Sergeant M. A. W., V.C.: 280
Rome: Allied policies for, in Spring offensive, 9-10, 32, 58-9, 233-5; evacuation, German decisions, 235-6, 274-5, 278-81; 5th Army's advance and entry, 279-80, 282-3; possession evaluated, 281, 289-90; administration, 416-8. Other refs, 53, 161, 413. *See also* Operation "Turtle"
Rommel, Field Marshal: 164, 345
Rooks, Lieut.-General L. W.: Deputy C.O.S. A.F.H.Q., 306, 318n; 'Anvil', 320-2
Roosevelt, President: exchanges with P.M. on 'Anvil' and Italian campaign, 327-38
Rösselsprung: German plan to destroy Tito's H.Q., 394-5, 401. *See* Map 13
Rothe, Major-General: 182, 239
Rover David: method of direct air support for 8th Army, 67, 157, 205
Rover Joe: method of direct air support for 5th Army, 67

Royal Air Force:
Commands:
Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East: organization, 15, 458
H.Q. Royal Air Force, Middle East: 16; sorties, 359-60, 368-72

Formations and Units:
Groups:
No. 201; 359n
205: admin. 15; operations in Italy and Balkans, 158, 373
209: 359n
212: 359n; operations in Aegean, 370 and n, 368-71
214 (Maintenance): 15
216: air transport, 27
219: 359n; operations in Aegean, 370 and n, 368-71
242: operations in Adriatic, 38, 355, 366, 391, 397; Balkan Air Force, 367n
Wings:
No. 239: 209
244: 210
334: 391
Italian Seaplane Wing: 354 and n

Digitized by Google

Royal Air Force—*cont.*
Squadrons:
No. 6: 370
36: 354, 355n
38: 370n, 371
39: 367
94: 370n, 371
108: 356
153: 352-3, 356
208: 47n
213: 370n, 371
221: 355n
227: 370n, 371
237: 47n
238: 47n
252: 367, 370n, 371
256: 356
272: 356
283: 355n
318: 47n
500: 354-5, and n
603: 367, 370n, 371
608: 366
A.O.P. Squadrons: 157n

Royal Australian Air Force:
No. 3 Squadron: 209
451 Squadron: 47n
454 Squadron: 370n, 371
458 Squadron: 354, 355n

Royal Army Ordnance Corps: 25, 437, 454-5
Royal Army Service Corps: 'Diadem', 26-9, 32-3, 88; strength in Med. Theatre, 411; labour problems, 412; road transport, 429-36; stores, 437n, 438; distribution of petrol, 440-4; rations, 451-4. *For* Units, *see under* Administration (R.A.S.C.)

Royal Horse Artillery:
Regts: 2nd and 12th, 81n
Royal Artillery:
Army Groups R.A.: 456
2nd A.G.R.A.: 248n
6th A.G.R.A.: 67
Field Regts:
3rd: 82n
17th: 81n, 120n
22nd: 81n
30th: 81n
52nd: 82n
53rd: 82n
77th: 81n
98th: 83n
111th: 392n, 408
132nd: 120n
138th: 120n
142nd: 81n
152nd: 120n
165th: 81n, 120n
Medium Regts:
2nd: 81n
5th: 248n
74th: 248n
75th: 81n
78th: 81n
102nd: 87, 110n, 248n
140th: 110n
Heavy Regts:
32nd: 248n
56th: 248n
75th: 81n
Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers: strengths, 25, 454; oil storage, 441n; repair, recovery, overhauls, 454-7
Royal Engineers: bridging, 82-4, 116, 293; transportation, 418, 425, 429-32; petroleum engineering, 440-3
Field Companies:
7th: 81n, 82, 116
56th: 116
59th: 81n, 82, 116
214th: 120n
225th: 81n, 82, 116
237th: 120n
256th: 120n
577th: 81n, 84, 116
Field Park Companies:
18th: 81n
281st: 120n
Royal Marines: frogmen, 384
40th (R.M.) Commando: 392n, 399-400, 407
43rd (R.M.) Commando: 392, 397n, 399-400, 407

Royal Navy: in anti-U boat ops, 354-5; in support of land forces, 358; S.O.E., 391-2; Brac, 397-8; admin., 413
15th Cruiser Squadron: 358
Anglo-Hellenic Schooner Flotilla: organization and tasks, 378
Levant Schooner Flotilla: 378
1st Submarine Flotilla (Malta): composition, 378; operations in Aegean, 381-4
10th Submarine Flotilla (Maddalena): operations in Western Mediterranean, 375-7
Light Coastal Forces: organization, 384; operations in Western Mediterranean, 385; in Adriatic, 385-6, 391-2, 397; in Aegean, 386
Ruffin, Major von: comd 4th Alpine Bn and Battle Group, 134
Rumania: Allied air attacks, 33, 45, 158, 213-4; role in German strategy, 339, 372-4
Rumohr, Lieut.-Colonel: comd 211th Gren. Regt and Battle Group, 140, 143
Rundstedt, Field Marshal von: 342n
Runkel, Colonel: C.O.S. 76th Pz. Corps, 232, 269
Russia and Russian forces: Allied air ops. 33, 45, 214; summer offensive, 316, 327, 338-9; German views on intentions for Balkans, 378-9
Russell, Major-General D: comd 8th Indian Div., 14, 77; plans Gari crossing, 82-3; exploitation, 122
Ryder, Major-General G. W.: comd 34th U.S. Div., 14, 219, 267

Sacco, river and valley: 244-6, 250, 252, 290
S. Angelo: as heel of 'Horseshoe', 78-9; 13th Corps' assault and capture, 107-8, 120-1

Digitized by Google

S. Angelo, Colle (Pt 575): 85-7; Polish battle for, 109, 132
S. Maria Infante: 95; German defence, 100-1; taken by 2nd U.S. Corps, 141
S. Oliva: in Hitler Line, 57, 148; capture by F.E.C., 151
Salerno: Allied deception plans, 22, 53, 307
Saville, Brigadier-General G. P.: comd U.S. XII Tactical Air Command, 67, 155
Scauri, Mt: 94, 141, 144
Schlemm, General: comd 1st Para Corps, 69, 224; Anzio perimeter, 230, 264; Cäsar Line, 268; further withdrawals, 272-5; reports from Rome, 282
Schmalz, Major-General: comd Hermann Göring Pz. Div., 70, 265, 269
Schrank, Major-General: comd 5th Mountain Div., 69, 72, 254
Schulz, Colonel: comd 1st Para Regt, and Battle Group, 113, 117, 124, 130, 134, 184
Scott, Brigadier C. A.: 81n, 106
Scott, Brigadier T. P.: 120 and n
Seligman, Lieut.-Commander A. C., R.N.R.: 378
Sénégalais: French destroyer, 354
Senger Line: 56, 181. *See* Hitler Line
Senger und Etterlin, General von: comd 14th Pz. Corps, on leave 11th May '44, 51; and Hitler Line, 150-1, 181; attempts to check F.E.C.. 168-9, 174-5, 253; withdrawal towards Cäsar Line, 239, 249, 258-9, 275, 281; Valmontone, 289
Sevez, Major-General F.: comd 4th Moroccan Mtn. Div., 14, 103; exploitation from Gustav Line, 137, 144-5, 175
Shipping: *see* Convoys, Landing Ships, Merchant Shipping, *and* 'Anvil'
Shoosmith, Brigadier S. N.: 81n, 105
Sickle, H.M.S.: last British sub. to be lost in Med., 383
Simcox, Captain G. L.: 189n, 192
Simonds, Lieut.-Colonel R. W.: comd no. 43 (R.M.) Commando, 397n, 398-400
Sinclair, Air Commodore L. F.: 404n
Sirius, H.M.S.: 358
Slessor, Air Marshal Sir John: C.-in-C. R.A.F. Med. and Middle East, and Deputy C.-in-C. M.A.A.F., 15, 18n; bombing policy, 36; air role in 'Anvil' debate, 320-2, 325; and in trans-Adriatic operations, 401
Sloan, Major-General J. E.: comd 88th U.S. Div., 14
Smith, Brigadier J. D.: 196n, 197-9
Smoke: screening of bridges, 80 and n, 123
'Snakes': mine-detonating device, 221, 229
Snow, Brigadier T. E.: 196n

South African Forces:
6th South African Armoured Division: arr. Italy, in reserve, 13, 15; composition, 256n; joins 1st Cdn. Corps, relieves 1st Cdn. Div., 257-9, 282
Formations and Units: *see* Order of Battle, 256n
South African Engineer Corps: and Cassino Task Force, 80; composition of Corps, 80n; railway units, 420, 425-8; petroleum units, 441n
South African Air Force:
No. 2 Wing: 370n, 371
Squadrons:
No. 7: 47n
15: 370n, 369-72
16: 370n, 371
17: 47n, 354
24: 370n, 371
40: 47n
Spaatz, General C.: comd U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, 2
Special Forces:
Force 133: 389-90 and n
Force 163: 390
Force 266: 390-1, 403-5
Force 399: 405
No. 1 Special Force: 390
2nd S.S. Brigade: 385; composition on Vis, 392n; raid on Brac, 397-400; Land Forces Adriatic, 407
Long Range Desert Group: 389, 408
Raiding Support Regt: 389, 407
Small Boat Squadron: 389, 408
No. 37 Military Mission: 403, 405
Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.): organization and forces employed, 387 and n-390, 403-5
Spezia: 359, 361-2
Sportsman, H.M.S.: 382
Spry, Brigadier D. C.: 176n, 188, 193-4
Stalin, Marshal: 283, 330
Stawell, Major-General W. A.: comd Special Operations, Med. Theatre of Operations, 389-90
Steinmetz, Major-General: comd 94th Inf. Div., 69, 71; Gustav Line, 141, 147, 150; replaced, 165
Stevens, Captain J. F., R.N.: 384
Stewart, Brigadier K.: 247n, 249
Straffner; Captain: comd Battle Group, 124 and n, 130, 134, 184, 195
'Strangle': air op. to destroy German communications S. of Pisa-Rimini, policies and tasks, 35-8; total M.A.T.A.F. sorties, 37; results, March '44, 38; 1st Apr.-12th May, 39-41; summing up, 42-4. *See also* Table foll. p. 53, *and* Map 3
Strong, Major-General K. W.: 306n
Subiaco: 204, 206-9, 238
Sulik, Major-General: comd 5th Kresowa Division, 15, 86n
Supply and Maintenance: *see under* Administration
Supplies and Stores: *see under* Administration (General Staff Reserve), also ammunition, POL, rations etc.
Sustain, U.S.S.: 354
'Swamp': method of combined air/sea operations against U-boats, 353-5

Tedder, Air Chief Marshal: 35
Tenacious, H.M.S.: 355
Termagant, H.M.S.: 355

Digitized by Google

Terracina: in Hitler Line, 57; German defence, 166-8; entered by 85th U.S. Div., 171-3
Terrain: *see under* 'Diadem'
Tetley, Brigadier J. N.: 15, 186n
Thomas, Major: 133
Tiber, river: German reserves, 22, 53, 68; bridges in Rome, 235-6, 282; AOK 14, 274, 281
Tito, Marshal: British support for, 307, 392-3; German views on, 339-40, 393; escapes to Vis from raid on his HQ, 394; Yugoslav National Army of Liberation, 403-6
Tivoli: AOK 10 withdrawal, 238, 258-9, 262, 275, 281, 289
Todt Organization: 42 and n
Toulon: and 'Anvil', 309-10, 322-4, 336; bombed, 361
Traffic Control: *see under* Roads
Transportation: *see under* Administration, also Roads, Railways, and Shipping
Trieste: 324-6, 335
Truscott, Major-General L. K.: comd 6th U.S. Corps, 14; plans attack on Valmontone, 221-2; launching of 'Buffalo', 228; fresh orders from Clark, 232-3; revises Corps' tasks, 261; tactical decisions, 267-8, 279; his situation on 25th May analysed, 288-9
Turkey: 378-9
'Turtle': defined, 221; Truscott ordered to mount, 232-3; objectives, 260; progress to 30th May, 262-8; Mt. Artemisio, 269; Clark's orders 31st May, 270-1; assessment, 289
Tweedsmuir, Lieut.-Colonel Lord: 257

U-boats: *U.371:* sunk, 354, 386
U.407: 353
U.421: sunk, 361, 386
U.453: sunk, 355, 386
U.455: sunk, 386
U.616: scuttled, 355, 386
U.731: sunk, 386
U.960: sunk, 355, 386
U.967: 354
Ultor, H.M.S.: 376-7, 381-2
Ultimatum, H.M.S.: 382-3
Universal, H.M.S.: 376-7
Unruly, H.M.S.: 382-3
Unsparing, H.M.S.: 382-4
Unswerving, H.M.S.: 382-4
Untiring, H.M.S.: 375-7
Upstart, H.M.S.: 375-7

United States Army, Commands and Forces:
5th Army: A.A.I.'s plans and orders for 'Diadem', 8-12, 16-20, 57-9; reinforcements, 13, 219; administration, 31-3; terrain factor, 55-6, 61-4, 141, 223-4; Clark's plans, and arty support, 63-4; general strength, 97n; Gustav Line, 137, 144, 150-2; regrouping, 146, 167; German concern at progress, 166, 195, 237, 253; 'Buffalo', 221, 228; 6th and 2nd U.S. Corps meet, 232; 'Turtle', 232-4, 260; orders to Corps, 31st May, 270-1; Alexander visits, 277; objectives N. of Rome, 282; city entered, 282-3; casualties, 284n; 'Diadem' summing-up, 287-9. *See* Maps 2, 9, 14 and 15

Corps:
2nd U.S. Corps: composition, Keyes comd 14, 93 and n; plans for 'Diadem', 63-4, 93-5; battles for Dora and Gustav Lines, 99-101, 140-2, 146-7, 151-2; Hitler Line, 167, 170-3; Lepini Mts., 264-6; tasks, 31st May, 270-1; adv. to Valmontone and Alban hills, 271-7; and to Rome, 279-82; 'Diadem' assessment, 289
4th U.S. Corps: H.Q. to Italy, 5th Army Reserve, 13-14; tasks, 29th May, 266
6th U.S. Corps: composition, Truscott comd, 14, 219-20 and n; role in A.A.I./5th Army 'Diadem' plans, 17-20, 62, 167; Truscott's plans for 'Buffalo', 221-3; launching orders, and progress to 25th May, 228-32; regrouping, on orders to mount 'Turtle', 232-3, 260-1; adv. on Campoleone axis, 262-3, 266-9, 272-4; on Valmontone axis, 265-6, 273; tasks, 31st May, 270-1; adv. in Alban hills, 277-80; and to Rome, 282; effects of 'Buffalo'/'Turtle' change of plan assessed, 287-9

Armoured Formations and Units:
1st U.S. Armd Div.: in 6th U.S. Corps, 14; composition, 219; plans for 'Buffalo', 222-3; and ops, 23rd-26th May, 228-31; into reserve, 262; to Campoleone, 267; tank losses, 272; adv. to Rome, 280
1st U.S. Armd Group: 14
Combat Command 'A': 228 and n, 261, 267
Combat Command 'B': 228 and n, 229-31, 261, 267, 272
1st Armd Regt: 219
13th Armd Regt: 219, 231, 261n
6th Armd Inf. Regt.: 219, 261n
Tank Bns:
191st: 219, 263, 272
751st: 219, 276
752nd: 272
753rd: 89n, 100
755th: 89n
756th: 89n, 100, 174n
757th: 89n
760th: 93n, 172
Howze Task Force: with 3rd U.S. Div., 261 and n, 262, 265, 272-3, 276; to lead to Rome, 279

Infantry Formations and Units:
3rd U.S. Div: in 6th U.S. Corps, 14; composition, 219; tasks, 222-3, 232, 261; adv. to Cori, 223, 229-32; and to Artena, 261-5; with 2nd U.S. Corps to Valmontone, 266, 271-2, 276; relief. 3rd June, 279

Digitized by Google

United States Army: Infantry Formations and Units—*cont.*
34th U.S. Div: in 6th U.S. Corps, 14; composition, 219; Mussolini Canal, 223, 229-31; battle for Lanuvio, 261-2, 266-7, 272-3, 277; arty support, 262
36th U.S. Div: to 6th U.S. Corps, ex Army reserve, 14, 167, 219; deception plan, 22; tasks, 222, 261-2; Mt. Artemisio, 268-9; adv. to Velletri and Albano, 277
45th U.S. Div: in 6th U.S. Corps, 14; composition, 219; Anzio perimeter, 222-3, 228; Campoleone station, 261-3, 266-7, 274, 277
85th U.S. Div: arr. Italy, for 2nd U.S. Corps, 13-4; composition, 93 and n; tasks, 94, 146, 167; Gustav Line, 100, 140-1, 146-7, 151; adv. to Terracina, 171-3; makes contact with 6th U.S. Corps, 232; adv. in Lepini and Alban hills, 266, 271-3, 276; and to Rome, 279
88th U.S. Div: arr. Italy, for 2nd U.S. Corps, 13-4; composition, 94n; tasks, 94, 167; Gustav and Dora Lines, 100-1, 140-1, 146-7; Hitler Line, 170-1; to Alban hills, 272-6; adv. to Rome, 279

Inf. Regts:
1st Special Service Force: composition, 222 and n; ops. with 6th U.S. Corps, 229-32, 261, 265; with 2nd U.S. Corps, 273, 276, 279; meets F.E.C., 276
Brett Force: 232n
7th Inf: 229-31, 262, 265, 276
15th Inf: 229-32, 261, 265, 272, 276
30th Inf: 229-32, 261, 265, 272-3, 276
133rd Inf: 230, 262-3, 267, 272, 277
135th Inf: 222, 231, 267, 272
168th Inf: 231, 262-3, 267, 273, 275-7
141st Inf: 273, 277
142nd Inf: 269, 277
143rd Inf: 269-71, 277
157th Inf: 263, 267, 272
179th Inf: 272
180th Inf: 263, 267
337th Inf: 100, 140, 146-7, 171-3, 266, 271-3, 276
338th Inf: 100, 140-1, 147, 171-3, 266, 272-3, 276
339th Inf: 100, 140-1, 147, 173, 276
349th Inf: 147, 151, 170-1
350th Inf: 100, 140-1, 170-1
351st Inf: 100, 140-1, 147, 151, 170-1
Artillery: 64, 94-5, 172, 226, 228. *See also* composition of Corps and divisions
Engineers: *see* composition of Corps and divisions
36th Engineer Combat Regt: 223, 232n, 272, 277

United States Army Air Force Commands:
Eighth Air Force: 2-3
Twelfth Air Force: 35
Fifteenth Air Force: formation and admin., 2-3, 15; sorties, 45-6, 213-4. *See* Appendix I
U.S. Army Air Forces, Med. Theatre of Operations: 15, 28
U.S. Army Air Force, Air Transport Command: 27
U.S. XII Air Support Command: responsibilities, pre-'Diadem', 12, 47; 'Strangle', 37-8; as U.S. XII Tactical Air Command, tasks defined by M.A.T.A.F., 10th May, 65; examples of direct support, 149-50, 207, 366; flexibility, 155; examples of attacks on ships at sea, 368-9. *See also* Appendix I
U.S. XII Troop Carrier Command: 28

Units:
Groups:
57th Fighter: 37, 47n
62nd Troop Carrier, 210
340th Medium Bombardment: 36n

Wings:
42nd Medium Bombardment: 37
57th Medium Bombardment: 37
62nd, at Naples: 363
63rd, in Sardinia: 363
Utili, General: comd Italian Corps of Liberation: 247n

Valmontone: 5th Army objective, named by A.A.I., 10, 19, 58-9; air attacks, 203-7; as 6th U.S. Corps' objective, 221-2, 224, 228; strike force reduced, 233, 260, 275; role in 8th Army's plans, 238, 259; and in Kesselring's decisions, 239-40n, 243, 250, 274; and in AOK 10's withdrawal, 238, 243, 259; entered, 276; role in battle for Rome discussed, 288-9
Vampire, H.M.S.: 375, 383-4
Velletri: in 6th U.S. Corps' plans, 222, 261; German defence, 230-1, 262-4; entered, 273
Vienna: 323, 338
Vietinghoff, Colonel-General von: commander AOK 10, 1; pre-'Diadem', assesses Allied intentions, regroups his Corps, 50-3, 75; on leave 11th May, 53; Cassino defence, 126, 130; Dora and Hitler Lines, 134, 143, 147-50; estimates casualties, 163; temporary fronts, 19th-26th May, 168-9, 201-2; escape-routes, 238-9, 243, 251-4; inter-Army boundary, 240; disengagement of 14th Pz. Corps, 258-9; in 'Diadem' assessment, 289. Other refs, 118, 166, 176, 230
Vigorous, H.M.S.: 375
Vis, island: value as Partisan and naval base, 385, 392; garrison, 392n, 407-8; assault on Brac, 395-8; Land Forces Adriatic, 405 and n
Vivid, H.M.S.: 375, 383
Vokes, Major-General C.: comd 1st Canadian Div, 15; adv. to Hitler Line, 176-80; Operation 'Chesterfield', 185-6, 188-9, 192-3; adv. to Melfa, 200; on Highway 6, 259-60
Vokes, Lieut.-Colonel F. A.: comd Vokes Force, 197-8
Vox, H.M.S.: 375

Digitized by Google

Wakeford, Captain R., V.C.: 119
Walker, Major-General F. L.: comd 36th U.S. Div., 14, 219, 268
Ward, Major-General A. D.: comd 4th Div., 14, 77; Gari crossing and exploitation, 81-2, 107, 119
War Cabinet, British: 283, 326
Weichs, Field Marshal von: tasks and problems as OB Südost, 339; strength in Western Balkans, 393; and *Rösselsprung*, 394
Welman, Captain A. E., R.N.: 385
Welsh, Air Marshal Sir William: 331
Wenninger, General: 42
Wentzell, Major-General: C.O.S. AOK 10, 51; and opening of 'Diadem', 75, 114; other refs, 148, 166, 232
Westphal, Lieut.-General: C.O.S. A Gp. C, 51-3; on leave 11th May, 75; reinforces 14th Pz. Corps, 195; other refs, 166, 168, 231
Wilson, General Sir Henry Maitland: Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, 11n; and 'Diadem' start-date and objectives, 19-20, 299-302, 305-8; ammunition shortages, 29-30, 444-7; reports Allies in Rome, 282; tasks as S.A.C., 307, 314; his reports and conferences on 'Anvil', 309-12, 317-24; withdrawals from A.A.I., 310; C.C.O.S. orders for 'Anvil', 333-6; defines Alexander's tasks, 5th July, 336; Special Operations Executive, 387-90; establishment of Balkan Air Force Command, 401-5; and of No. 37 Military Mission, 405
Witthöft, General: 70

Yugoslavia: air attacks, 45-6, 158, 214, 394-5, 400; Allied support for Army of National Liberation, 307, 389-90 and n, 403-6; provisioning, 390-1 and n; German activities, 338-9, 364

Zangen, General von: comd *Armeegruppe* in N. Italy, 70
Ziegler, Brigadier: 193
Zuckerman, Professor S.: report on strategic bombing, and 'Strangle', 35, 44

Digitized by Google

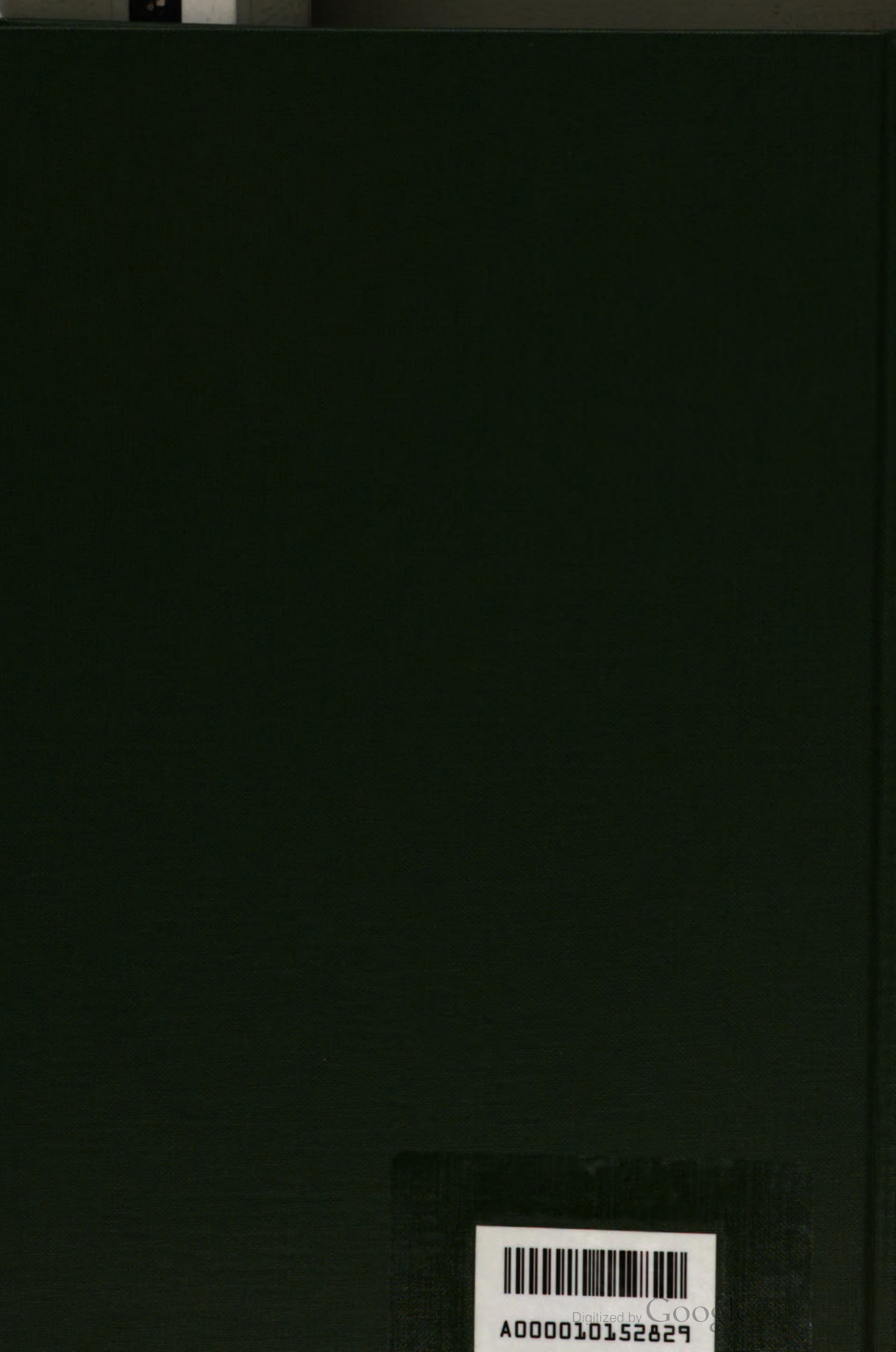
Digitized by Google

D766
.P6
v.6
pt.1

A000010152829

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google


A000010152829
Digitized by Google